Glasgow
University Library

Presented by
Professor D. M. Brogan
639.—1939.

~~PH² g.17~~

English
NW 40.M6
1923

3 -4 9 13 15, C. 22 - 4 - 28 31 -7-8 - 45 - 48
D
49 - 52 - 57 - 9 61 - 3 · 70 · 76 - 83
86 - 91 - 6 P88 . 99 - 103 - 105-6 - 117 · 27 - 38 144
146 - 8 Penn W. Bogan. January 18th 1926
150 - 4 - 6 - 160. 8 - 74-5 - 6
184 - 8 - 196 - 200 - 208 - 12 214
218 - 23 - 9 · 37 · 45 · 8 - 252

52

Very good indeed!

20.1.26.

MORE PREJUDICE

MORE PREJUDICE

BY

A. B. WALKLEY

NEW YORK:
ALFRED A. KNOPF: MCMXXIII

Reprinted, by the courtesy of the Proprietors, from THE TIMES.

GLASGOW UNIV LIBRARY
WITHDRAWN

Printed in Great Britain.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Gulliver and the Plumitives	1
Candide at Drury Lane	6
Neapolitans	11
Jane on the Stage	16
Enchanting Bores	21
Jane's Prejudice	26
Snobbery	31
More Proust	36
A New Psychometry	42
Proust the Man	47
"E. V." and Proust	52
Misrepresented France	57
Reality	62
Player and Part	66
Some Open Secrets	72
Applause	78
Stage Illusion	83
Hurticles	88
Blackbirds	93
The Exemplary Theatre	98
The Surprise Theatre	103
An Anti-Romantic	108
Genius and Disorder	113
Real Chinamen	118
A False Analogy	122
The Film Hero	126

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Puppetry	131
Charles I.'s Infirmity	136
Dramatized Novels	140
Art as Liberation	144
American Civilization	149
Sympathy	153
On and Off the Stage	158
In Criticism	163
Judging without Experiencing	168
A Former Generation	173
A Letter Writer	177
Sainte-Beuve	182
A Correspondence	186
Romance for the Sedentary	191
N or M	196
The Art of Living	201
Through French Eyes	206
At the Zoo	211
An Hotel Revolution	216
London Museum Ghosts	221
The Complete Amorist	226
Corinthianism	232
Flamboyancy	237
The Literary Document	242
An Election Postcard	247
Lip-Sticks	252

GULLIVER AND THE PLUMITIVES

THE Luggnuggians are a polite and generous people; and although they are not without some share of that pride which is peculiar to all countries in the League of Nations yet they show themselves courteous to strangers, especially such as are countenanced by the court. I had many acquaintance among persons of the best fashion, and being always attended by an interpreter, the conversation we had was not disagreeable.

One day, in much good company, I was asked by a person of quality whether I had seen any of their *plumitives*, or, as the vulgar call them, scribblers. I said I had not; and desired he would explain to me who these people were and why they were thus named. You must know, he replied, that *plume* is for pen in French, which is the language of the polite, and these are the people who wield their pens for the public good and their own. Have you never heard in your own country how such an one wields the pen of a ready writer? Here all our *plumitives* wield that pen. I cried out, as in a rapture: Happy nation, where every writer wields a ready pen for the common weal! Happy people, who have masters ready to instruct them in the wisdom of all

former ages! I would with great thankfulness pass my life here in the conversation of those superior beings the *plumitives*, if they would please to admit me.

The gentleman to whom I addressed my discourse said to me with a sort of smile which usually ariseth from pity to the ignorant, that he was glad of any occasion to keep me among them, and desired my permission to explain to the company what I had spoke. Thereupon there was a good deal of talk among them in the language of the country, not without some laughter at my expense, and the same gentleman said he was desired by the rest to set me right in a mistake, which I had fallen into through the common imbecility of human nature, and upon that allowance was less answerable for it. That it might be possible for a foreigner to believe in the wisdom of former ages he allowed, but so monstrous a notion, he said, could no longer be entertained by an enlightened nation like the Luggnuggians. They dismissed it as *vieux jeu*, which was their last word of contempt. They looked to their *plumitives* for instruction in a very different matter, namely, the wisdom of the passing moment. As for the wisdom of former ages, it came under the head of pre-war wisdom, about which the best that could be said was, let bygones be bygones.

For surely you must know, said he, that there hath been a war on? It hath left many trifling matters unsettled, as, for example, the boundaries

of States, the policy of the Labour Party, and the rate of the income-tax, but it hath clearly settled the assortment of our *plumitives*. The foolish ancients were wont to speak of the humaner letters, but we Luggnuggians call them more wisely the fiercer letters, and the men who practise them we divide into Pre-Warriors and Post-Warriors.

After this preface he gave me a particular account of the two parties. The Pre-Warriors, he said, were allowed to live only through the boundless clemency of the prince. They were the objects of universal contempt, for they blindly persisted in producing verses that would scan and in using words that were to be found in the dictionary. They talked among themselves of well-made plays, Ibsenism and Shavianism and Dan Leno, though nobody else in the country knew what these words meant. Their sentences are so long that they can seldom amuse themselves with reading, because their memory will not serve to carry them from the beginning of a sentence to the end. The oldest and by consequence the worst of them are called Victorians. These melancholy and dejected creatures have lost their teeth and hair, and affect to console themselves with incomprehensible jokes out of their sacred book called "Pickwick." In talking they forget the common appellation of things, and the names of persons, even of those who are their nearest friends and relations. This mortification they endure because they will not adopt the simple expedient of

the Post-Warriors, who call everybody " old thing " or " old bean," without discrimination of persons. For, language being always upon this flux, the *plumitives* of one age do not understand those of another, and thus they lie under the disadvantage of living like foreigners in their own country. It might be supposed that these unhappy Victorians would acquire an additional ghastliness in proportion to their number of years, and so, in truth, it is with the Late-Victorians and Mid-Victorians. But one or two Early-Victorians still survive, and these are outwardly honoured even by the youngest Post-Warriors, because both the youngest and the oldest agree in reviling the age between.

Seeing that my obliging friend was wearying of this musty topick, I asked him of what kind were the Post-Warriors. His manner forthwith waxed exuberant and he answered me joyfully that these were the brightest ornament of the Luggnuggian island. They were all omniscient and infallible. When they were not swinging incense in one another's faces, which exercise they had found of great profit for their sinews, they " scrapped," as they called it, the traditions and " rotted " the classics. All of them were poets and at the same time " ists "—Futurists, Dadaists, Vers-Librists, Psycho-analysts. In criticism their cardinal principle was to abuse the works of Jules Lemaître. There was only one fly in the ointment : they feared the generation of the previous week. For it must happen that when youth is the

test of merit, the younger you are the more omniscient and infallible. Thus the Post-Warriors in the twenties are abashed by those in their teens, and then again by the more juvenile editors of School Magazines and occupants of the Lower Forms. Infants in arms, although they must be the depositaries of the supreme wisdom, are ruled out, because they cannot articulately express it. At the head, then, of the Post-Warrior hierarchy, we place the children in the nursery, who occupy themselves for the most part in writing or dictating their Autobiographies, Memoirs and Reminiscences.

Are there, then, I asked, no women *plumitives?* Many, replied my friend, but I forebore to mention them, for fear you might think they squinted. The truth is, every Luggnuggian woman writer keeps one eye on her paper and the other on some man—for choice, the nearest lusty stripling in sight. What happens, I inquired, if she have only one eye? She writes, said my friend, short aphorisms with many asterisks. This may perhaps pass with the reader rather for an European or English story than for one of a country so remote. But he may please to consider that the caprices of woman-kind are not limited by any climate or nation, and that they are much more uniform than can be easily imagined.

CANDIDE AT DRURY LANE

Among those who did Candide the honours of the town was a Brighter Londoner, one of those busybodies who condole with strangers in their passage through the capital, tell them how ugly every part of it is, and depict the pleasures they might enjoy, if things were otherwise. He first took Candide and Martin to the new Drury Lane, where they were exhibiting the rebuilt house to a distinguished company of admirals, Cabinet Ministers, soldiers, lawyers, and men about town.

"Are these your great actors?" asked Candide of the Brighter Londoner.

"Yes, but outside the playhouse."

"Then what do they here?"

"They are here to brighten London. Admirals are held especially useful for this purpose, because of their cheerfulness. Besides, it keeps them out of harm's way at sea."

"After all, it is kinder than shooting them," said Candide, remembering his old friend Byng, who was shot to encourage the others.

"That is why they are so cheerful," said the Brighter Londoner. "And it is on the same principle of cheerfulness that this playhouse has now

been reconstructed. Where there were four tiers there are now three. Four were 'tiers, idle tiers,' but three are cheerful, particularly when planned on the cantilever principle."

"What," asked Candide, "is the cantilever principle?"

"It is the principle," replied the Brighter Londoner, "by which four things are reduced to three. Applied to four-act plays, it will often convert a frost into a furore of enthusiasm."

"How many plays are produced in England in the year?" said Candide.

"Some four or five thousand, including picture-plays and plays that are not plays."

"What a number!" said Candide. "How many good?"

"From one-and-a-half to two," replied the other.

"What a number!" said Martin.

"But an improvement may be hoped for," said Candide, "under the cantilever principle. What is the play they are going to produce here?"

"A play that will need no cantileverage, for it is not in four acts, but in a prologue and three acts. The objection to it is that the author does not know a word of Italian, yet the scene is in Italy; moreover, he is a man who has not mastered Einstein's theory of relativity. These points, be assured, will not escape the notice of 'the critics.'"

"What are they?" asked Candide.

"They are bad characters and enemies of Brighter

London, who gain their livelihood by saying evil of most plays and all *revues*. Mr. Charles Cochran, one of our Brightest Londoners, has proposed that they should be shot."

"Like Admiral Byng," interjected Candide. "Are any of these wretched beings present?"

"Oh no; their presence would damp even the admirals' cheerfulness. They are shut up in Bedlam, and only let loose on first nights. It is then they wreak their vengeance on mankind by uttering their infamous opinions."

"I am more a Manichean now than ever," said Martin.

Candide's eye was caught by a beautiful actress who had somehow got among the cheerful admirals. "That actress," said he to Martin, "pleases me much; she has a likeness to my Cunégonde; I should be very glad to wait upon her."

The Brighter Londoner offered to introduce him. Candide asked what was the etiquette, and how they treated actresses in England.

"It is necessary to make distinctions," said the Brighter Londoner. "In the provinces they receive deputations and, as you may see by a visit to *Mayfair and Montmartre*, are waited on by the Mayor. In London they preside at meetings of benevolent societies, afford interviews to the representatives of evening newspapers, and adorn with their photographs the advertisements of what are called proprietary articles. And occasionally they act."

"Do they act well?" asked Candide.

"As well," replied the Brighter Londoner, "as can be expected. Some allowance must be made for the pressure of their social, public, and eleemosynary engagements. Their first duty is to brighten London by being beautiful. When their beauty begins to wane they begin to think seriously about acting. But much may be done to postpone the evil day by *poudre de riz* and a lip-stick. If these conveniences could be withheld the art of acting would have a better chance."

"But it would be an art *in vacuo*," said Martin. "Your theatres would be empty."

"True," replied the Brighter Londoner, "and there would be an end to all picture shows. Close-ups, in particular, would altogether close up. For these depend upon the lip-stick. It is the only means of securing that perfect Cupid's bow which is indispensable for film heroines."

"Could you," asked Candide, "present me to a film heroine?"

"You might as well ask me," said the Brighter Londoner, "to present you to the moon. Film heroines are not accessible to ordinary men. Even the cheerful admirals are excluded from the presence. Crowned heads are carefully scrutinized before admission."

"What a heroine your Cunégonde would have made," exclaimed Martin, "for the films! Think of the Bulgarian ravishers, the Jew Issachar,

the Inquisitor, and the Governor Don Fernando d'Ibaraa y Figuera y Mascarenas y Lampourdos y Souza ! "

" All that is very well," answered Candide, " but we must cultivate our garden."

NEAPOLITANS

They had wandered down, arm-in-arm, by the Porta Capuana, to be among the real, and rather sinister-looking, populace. One of them, apparently an Englishman of high fashion, stopped a passing *pizzaiuolo* and bought a chunk of *pizza*, which he courteously handed to his companion, who devoured it with immense gusto, rolling his eyes and patting his stomach and ejaculating, between the mouthfuls, "O Santissima Vergine, che maraviglia, che delizia!" He was clad, the demonstrative one, in the picturesque rags and peaked hat of a *lazzarone* from an Academy picture of the 'fifties, with a mandoline slung over his shoulder, and, indeed, presented a figure so antiquely and so theatrically Neapolitan that the street urchins crowded round him begging for *soldi*, under the impression that he must be an English Milor got up for a fancy ball. To escape the importunities of the crowd they sought refuge in a quiet *caffè*, where the apparent Englishman (clothes from Savile Row, necktie from the Burlington Arcade, hat from the bottom of St. James's Street) pulled out a copy of *The Times* and read aloud :—

MORE PREJUDICE

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

ROME, Oct. 2.

Signor Bonomi, the Prime Minister, who is on a short visit to Naples, has informed a journalist that during a recent conversation in Paris Mr. Lloyd George said to him :—" Mine is a Southern temperament, and if I were compelled to change my citizenship I should like to become a Neapolitan."

He eyed his companion with mingled deference and curiosity. For though Benedetto Croce was a philosopher, from whom nothing human was alien, he knew his Naples, none better, and could not, somehow, see it as the adopted city of this Welsh mountaineer. From the slopes of Snowdon to Vesuvius was a far cry ! And yet there was his wonderful " opportunism," of which the newspapers were so full—this must mean marvellous adaptability, and, see, how zealously he was now trying to adapt himself ! Zealously—though, to be sure, on information somewhat out of date. These Northerners, however Southern they might fancy their temperaments, could never be got to understand that Italy moved ! They always saw her in the *défroque* of Fra Diavolo ! Then he addressed his guest in English of perfect ease :—

So your Southern temperament couldn't wait, Eccellenza, and you have already become, for your brief stay on our Parthenopean shores, a Neapolitan ?

Mr. Lloyd George.—Sicuro, mio caro, sicuro !

B.C.—And I see you have donned a garb that takes the Neapolitan mind back, in thoughtful retrospect, to the days of King Bomba, when they

shut up my venerated master Francesco de Sanctis in the Castel dell' Uovo yonder. But that has nothing to surprise me. For I have always maintained that all history is contemporary history, so that we re-live the days of King Bomba when we contemplate them historically, as we cannot but do, Eccellenza, when we contemplate your costume. May I assume that this view is familiar to you ? It is in my " Teoria della Storiografia."

L.G.—(His " opportunism " to the rescue—with an air of having read everything)—Per Bacco !

B.C.—Quite so, and may I parenthetically say how charming it is to an old Neapolitan to hear his newest fellow-citizen swear, in the antique mode, by Bacchus ? It carries one pleasantly back to the old days before the " Via di Toledo " had become the " Roma " and before the Torretta was turned into a confounded halting-place for tramcars. But your adoption of our local idiom, new or old, is only part, if I may say so, of your usual linguistic courtesy. Do we not all know how fluently you address the Welsh in their own language and how most of your auditors have to cram up their native tongue in advance in order to follow you ? Indeed, I fancy I am not alone in supposing that your reported decision not to go to Washington was dictated by your consciousness of unfamiliarity with the American language. The point interests me, because, as you will remember from my " Estetica," I was the first to point out the identity of art and language,

language and art. It seems to have been reserved for you, Eccellenza, to identify language with artfulness.

L.G.—(Shrugging his shoulders and turning up the palms of his hands)—Ma che vuole ?

At this moment a pair of street-musicians appeared in the doorway and began squalling the eternal " Funicoli, funicola." Mr. Lloyd George, promptly unslinging his mandoline, accompanied the song.

B.C.—(A little coldly)—Pardon me, Eccellenza, but these are not electors. And let me tell you, between ourselves, for your guidance, that this horrible tune is only served up to foreigners. No true Neapolitan would ever listen to it.

L.G. (hotly ; still twanging his mandoline).—Seccatore !

B.C. (more hotly).—You're another, and—

But the dispute was interrupted by a vast concourse of people on their way to Santa Chiara for the miracle of S. Januarius. The philosopher and the Premier followed the crowd and pressed into the church, where the priests were holding up the ampulla containing the sacred blood and the populace were praying and excitedly crying out at intervals : " San Gennaro, non ci fare aspettare più ! Fa il miracolo, fa il miracolo ! " But the officiating priest shook his head, and a group of peasant women shrilled out : " Faccela, faccela, la grazia, San Gennarino mio bello." Wild with excitement, his opportunism combining with his Southern tempera-

ment to make him swell the chorus, the neo-Neapolitan shrieked out: "Ah, faccela, faccela, questa divina grazia, faccela, faccela, San Gennarino, bello, bello, bello!" Suddenly the priest's face was irradiated. The blood of S. Januarius was boiling.

So was the blood of Benedetto Croce. This was the Southern temperament with a vengeance! To think that this Protestant of Protestants, this pillar of all the Welsh Little Bethels, could thus embrace the opposite faith and, *magari*, fling himself headlong into its most childish superstitions. "Hark'ye, sir," he began, "when you are conversing with a philosopher, it is not decent"—but the new Neapolitan citizen was already halfway along the Mergellina, dancing madly, and, with all the force of his Southern temperament, thrumming out "Funicoli, funicola."

JANE ON THE STAGE

I PROMISED to discuss Mr. and Mrs. Squire's stage-version of *Pride and Prejudice,* and I rather wish I hadn't. When the excitement aroused in the play-house has had time to cool, to reopen the subject seems like " sermons and soda-water the day after." I said I found it hard to forgive any one who laid hands on a novel of Jane Austen's. After all, I reflect, the offence is venial; it is not so bad as robbing a church. And so I feel rather like Emma when rebuked by Mr. Knightley for her uncharitable gibe at Miss Bates. Nevertheless, as I shall be presumed to have promised faithfully—no! I mustn't say that, remembering Mr. Tilney's sarcastic remark to Catherine: " A faithful promise! That puzzles me. I have heard of a faithful performance. But a faithful promise; the fidelity of promising! " —anyhow, I *did* promise, and cannot wriggle out of it.

It is not because *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the world's classics, too venerable to be touched, that its transfer to the stage distressed me. *The Three Musketeers* is also a classic, still more renowned in the world at large, and I can see it in the theatre with no less delight than I can read it in the printed

page. Indeed, its dare-devil exploits, its fights, its hair-breadth escapes, rather gain than lose by being seen "in the round." But Jane Austen's novels (Mary Bennet would have been capable of this judgment) are not romances of adventure. Why does Mary Bennet come into my head? Because she appears in the play and is simply unrecognizable; a transient, embarrassed phantom, whose sententious commonplaces, so delicious in the book, now go for nothing. For in the play we are—we cannot but be—mainly concerned with the action, to which Mary's observations seem only a pointless interruption. Her original *value* has been lost. She illustrates, in her small way, the general case. The fact is, all the values have been changed. I was, and perhaps still am, rather at a loss to account for the wholesale transvaluation. Probably, however, the simplest explanation is the true one; the difference between the process of the reader's imagination and the spectator's vision. The reader's imagination acts (for that is how every work of art gets itself communicated) in obedient correspondence with the novelist's and sees the people of her creation in the proportions and perspective she assigns to them. In the theatre this correspondence is upset in two ways. First, there is the real personality and presence of the actor—who can, at the best, represent only approximately the figure imagined by the novelist—I will return to that in a moment. Secondly, there is the rearrangement, cutting down, fore-

shortening of the novel, inevitable in the process of transfer to the stage. All the novelist's narrative has to go, *as* narrative; any of it that is retained must be converted into dialogue. The original dialogue, if it is retained (and a version of a Jane Austen scene with entirely new dialogue would be unthinkable), can only now and then be retained in its original shape and place; it must be cut into lengths and redistributed, pieced together in a new pattern; and its original quality will be altered by the mere fact that it has lost the relief and preparation of the abolished narrative. It is this process of selecting the proper bits of dialogue and piecing them together that tests the adapter's skill; and Mr. and Mrs. Squire, I am sure, made their patchwork as neatly as it could be made. But no amount of skill will ever bridge the gulf between a patchwork and an organic growth.

With the proportions, then, and the perspective inevitably altered, the values of the characters cannot but be changed, too. In the playhouse Mrs. Bennet (thanks partly to the energy and comic gifts of the actress) became unduly important; she dominated the stage, whereas in the novel she dominates nothing. Another minor character that gained in importance was Miss Bingley (again very well played); indeed, she outshone Jane Bennet, who became merely what Darcy unkindly called her, a young lady who "smiles too much." Jane, you see, is a passive character, and passive characters

are apt to come off badly when transferred to the activities of the stage. Mr. Bennet, too, suffered sadly. This was not our ironic commentator of the novel, whose cooling gusts of intellectual " detachment " are so valuable a corrective to the *odor di femmina* of the Bennet parlour, but a rude gentleman who seemed (and no wonder) to be astonished at his own boorishness. Mr. Bennet as a " note " in the melody of the novel is quite a different thing from Mr. Bennet in the flesh and in the glare of the footlights. As there was no room in the play for Rosings, Mr. Collins was shorn of some of his choicest Collinsisms (the actor, by the way, might have been a little more broadly comic) and poor Lady Catherine de Bourgh was left without any " preparation " for her great dialogue with Elizabeth. She entered upon that dialogue as a perfect stranger to us all and we lost the full bitterness of her defeat abroad because we knew nothing of her magnificence at home. Darcy suffered in the same way. With no Hunsford, he had to do his wooing anywhere handy, and his long letter of explanation had to be taken as read. (Fancy a novel of Jane Austen's without the letters !) His relations with Wickham were by no means clear, and Wickham himself became a nonentity.

But the worst depreciation of value happened to Elizabeth. Remember that she is much more than the heroine of the novel ; she is in it, and at the same time over it, for it is through her eyes that we see the other people, and her feelings about them that

we share. The very quintessence of the book is her change of mind and heart over Darcy, the transformation in her eyes of the merely " proud " Darcy of her " prejudice " into the human, estimable, lovable Darcy first revealed in the long letter which she read through twice in the novel and hastily skipped on the stage. In the theatre Elizabeth necessarily ceases to be our confidant and second self, and becomes only one of the dramatic personages. A few gestures and spoken words have to convey to us her feelings towards Darcy and the seismic convulsion taking place in her heart. No one could represent this transvalued Elizabeth more sweetly than Miss Mary Jerrold ; but she is not *our* Elizabeth, Jane Austen's Elizabeth. . . . Nor can any other of the actors really present the novelist's characters, because we know those characters too well. Our imagination has shaped and coloured them for us in accordance with Jane Austen's, and we resent these people of flesh and blood who assume their names and speak their speeches, these manifest impostors who are unlike the figures fixed in our imagination, just as we resent " illustrations " in the pages of the novels. As the author of *Sei Personaggi in cerca d'Autore* puts it so well : it is the imaginary people created by the author who are real, and the actors who are unreal. This, by the way, suggests an argument against playing Shakespeare or any other stage classic.

ENCHANTING BORES

Miss Thackeray said of Jane Austen that her very bores are enchanting. She was no doubt thinking of Miss Bates, who would have been terrible to live with in Highbury but is a joy to live with in "Emma," the very best bore, I suppose, in all fiction. But Jane's bores are all good, Mr. Woodhouse, Lady Bertram, Mr. Collins, and the excellent Mrs. Allen, who, "while she sat at her work, if she lost her needle or broke her thread, if she heard a carriage in the street or saw a speck upon her gown, must observe it aloud, whether there were any one at leisure to answer her or not." There are people who are not amused by these bores. They say, in excuse, that bores may be made so life-like in fiction as to become as tiresome as they would be in fact. But the excuse won't hold, for it is nothing but the old anti-æsthetic confusion between the representation and the thing represented. If it held, then the picture of an ugly man would be itself ugly, and no tragedy, no representation of suffering, could give pleasure to the spectator. (Rousseau fell into this confusion when he said that we went to a tragedy for the pleasure of seeing others suffer, without

suffering ourselves.) But Boileau's couplet states the truth familiar to us all :—

> Il n'est pas de serpent ni de monstre odieux
> Qui par l'art imité ne puisse plaire aux yeux.

And bores, "imitated by art," do not bore but amuse. The fact is, people who are bored by Jane Austen's bores are probably bored by Jane herself. We are not all born with a sense of humour and some of us are born bored. Others have boredom thrust upon them.

That is why it has been said that we are all bores to somebody. The enthusiast is a bore to the indifferent, the statistician to the poet, and the metaphysician to the political partisan. Many worthy people are bored by articles about the theatre, and some of us are even bored by gossip about golf. But these are cases of boredom by accident, by the fact that the speaker happens to be addressing the wrong listener. The golfer whose gossip bores me will not bore a fellow-golfer. The genuine bore is the person of one subject, on which he addresses everybody, including, of course, a majority of wrong listeners. Or he is a bore by mental character—loquacious or pompous or peevish or simply silly about every subject. He is a bore, that is to say, not to some one but to every one.

How is it that these types, so deadly in fact, may be made so amusing in fiction ? There is first, of course, the old artistic secret of selection. The

novelist or the playwright chooses just as much of the bore as suits his purpose, exaggerates him here and deletes him there—in short, gives him what he lacks in real life, form. Then he must look at him with a kindly eye. He must suffer bores gladly in life, or he will never get us to be glad of them in representation. They must appeal to his sense of humour and to his good humour. He must imaginatively sympathize with them, as indeed he must with all his personages, villains as well as heroes. This gift of imaginative sympathy is precisely what is lacking in people who are bored by Jane Austen's bores or by anything.

Macaulay compared Jane to Shakespeare for her avoidance of caricature. He might have compared them in their genial treatment of bores. Shakespeare's bores are notoriously among his best things. Polonius is, of course, an easy first. He is the colossal bore, the bore outstanding even among the usual boredom of a Court. But Shakespeare ennobles him by putting something of himself into him, by giving him, for instance, those maxims of worldly wisdom to utter to Laertes—and that seems hardly fair. But take his minor bores, so obviously studied from the life and presented with absolute realism—Dogberry and Verges, Shallow and Slender and Silence. You can hear him quietly chuckling as he chats and drinks with their real prototypes. And you know, too, that he enjoyed their company, cheerfully taking what in them would have been

tiresome to other men as part of the human comedy, excellent stuff to " do."

They are bores who, like Miss Bates and Lady Bertram, can never bore the judicious. On the other hand, one need not, I think, forgo all claim to *jugeotte* if one admits that, by lapse of time and change of taste, one or two of Shakespeare's people who presumably were not bores for him have become bores for us. I submit that the ghost of Hamlet's father has become merely tiresome for most of us, that he does not impress us either as he does Hamlet or as he did Shakespeare. We were intended to shiver, but we are more inclined to smile and then to yawn. Some of the Shakespearian fools have lost their fun. Lancelot Gobbo, for instance, bores me—and I imagine many other playgoers—stiff. Then in Shakespeare, as in lesser men, there are people who have to be borne with because they are necessary to the plot, and for no other reason. Antonio is such a one, and I confess to being bored by Antonio. And if any one wants an additional bit of internal evidence that *The Tempest* is " very late " Shakespeare I suggest he may find it in Prospero, who strikes me as the product of a slightly tired Shakespeare. As we all know, Shakespeare made Prospero the mouthpiece of some of the most gorgeous poetry he ever wrote, but between these poetic outbursts there are unmistakable *longueurs*. Prospero fears that at times he must be boring Miranda, and therein, I think, reveals Shakespeare's

own fear that he must be boring his public. At the last revival of the play, Mr. Henry Ainley spoke and played Prospero beautifully—I cannot imagine a better performance—but I was glad when it was over. Not even this accomplished actor could hide from us the fact that Prospero is sometimes a bore. And, heretical though it may be, I will venture the opinion that there is apt to be boredom in the *acted* Falstaff. But Falstaff is one of our greatest English masterpieces of wit and humour and human character? Yes, to read, to imagine in one's mind's eye, to turn over on one's tongue; but on the stage his eternal paunch gets in the way. His wheezings and puffings, his gurgling potations, and all the "business" that actors think indispensable to a grossly fat man are to me mere ugliness and the occasion of *ennui*.

The marvel is that, with all the changes wrought in us by three centuries, we are still able to take Shakespeare's point of view about most of his characters and that so few of them have become bores. Jane Austen has only been tried for a third of that time, to be sure, but I cannot think of a single one of her people who has even begun to show the slightest sign of "turning," of causing the reader boredom instead of delight. It looks as though they would "keep" for ever.

JANE'S PREJUDICE

WHAT every one feels in Jane Austen is her fair-mindedness, her toleration for the human infirmities that she had so keen an eye for, the absence of anything like spite from her work. In her novels, that is, for in her letters she could sometimes be "savage and tartarly." Once Emma let her tongue run away with her about Miss Bates. Mr. Knightley reproved her. She blushed and wept for her fault. It has been conjectured that this represents an incident in Miss Austen's own experience, and it may well be so. But Emma's momentary unkindness to Miss Bates, her inferior in station, was as nothing to Miss Austen's uniform unkindness to her people of rank, to the great men and great ladies of her little rural communities. This, I think, reveals a certain prejudice—prejudice against rank, impatience with the social hierarchy of her day.

She certainly disliked baronets. Sir John Middleton is good-natured but stupid, heavy and boisterous. Sir Thomas Bertram is sensible but narrow and pompous. Sir Walter Elliot is a vain fool and an intolerable snob. There is only one peer in her novels, Lord Osborne in the unfinished tale "The Watsons," and he is an empty ass. "Spoke again

in praise of half boots " settles *him.* Lady Susan Vernon is the wickedest of her women, as Lady Bertram is the most slow-witted and Lady Catherine de Bourgh the haughtiest and most tyrannical. She may be said to have drawn up an indictment against the British aristocracy. The class just below, the squires, clergymen, and naval officers, were sugar and spice and all that's nice; once they got a handle to their names and they became snipes and snails and puppy dogs' tails. Perhaps that is why " Emma " is the most joyous of her books. It is a story without " magnates "; there are few class distinctions to ruffle the author's equanimity.

Note, too, that while she dislikes her aristocrats, she reserves her most cutting scorn for those who too ostentatiously like them. Mr. Collins is as severely dealt with for his servility to Lady Catherine as is Sir William Lucas for his snobbery about the Court of St. James's. Tom Musgrave is trounced for dancing attendance on the Osbornes. As a last mark of contempt for General Tilney—" never had the General loved his daughter so well in all her hours of companionship, utility, and patient endurance, as when he first hailed her ' Your Ladyship ! ' "

What a contrast is all this to Balzac's worship of " the Faubourg " and his eternal duchesses ! The English gentlewoman knew her aristocrats and, it would seem, resented them; the French *roturier* drew them from his imagination and fell in love with his own dreams. The Duchesse de Langeais and the

Princesse de Cadignan inhabit a world of their own and have no relation to the real world ; theirs is a region as ideal as the Pays de Tendre ; whereas Lady Catherine lives at Rosings, which is within four hours' drive of Mr. Gardiner's in Gracechurch Street, and is " a most active magistrate in her own parish," and Lord Osborne attends the first winter assembly at the town of D. in Surrey " because it was judged expedient for him to please the borough." But it would be idle to pursue the comparison between romance and reality.

It is also, no doubt, a comparison between humour and the lack of it. Jane Austen, unsympathetic to her aristocrats, made merciless fun of them. If Mr. Collins is the first, Lady Catherine is the next greatest comic figure of that dreadful epoch of pomposity in which they lived. But there was one thing that Miss Austen held more comic than pomposity, and that was family pride. For Sir Walter Elliot she reserves her choicest scorn. Sir Walter, who " never took up any book but the Baronetage ; there he found occupation for an idle hour and consolation in a distressed one ; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect by contemplating the limited remnants of the earliest patents ; there any unwelcome sensations arising from domestic affairs changed naturally into pity and contempt as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century ; and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own

history with an interest which never failed." Then there were "our cousins, the Dalrymples." One was a Dowager Viscountess and the other an Honourable—and so nothing good could be said of them. "Had Lady Dalrymple and her daughter even been very agreeable, Anne would still have been ashamed of the agitation they created; but they were nothing. There was no superiority of manner, accomplishment, or understanding." Give any one a handle to his name and he goes at once into Miss Austen's black books. Even mere "supers" or *personæ mutæ*, that flit for an instant across her page, must, if they are aristocratic, have their slap. "They were nothing." Balzac, on the other hand, traces their pedigree, describes their coats of arms, tells you how the pronunciation of their names differs from the spelling—in a word, wallows in it. When the Marquise d'Espard meets Lucien de Rubempré for the first time, she says to him: "Nous savons un peu la vie et nous connaissons tout ce qu'il y a de solide dans un titre de comte pour un élégant, un ravissant jeune homme." And Lucien thinks it quite natural that a marquise should talk to him in that way. And so does Balzac. After such specimens as this, you read with stupefaction Sainte-Beuve's question about Balzac: "Qui surtout a plus délicieusement touché les duchesses et les vicomtesses de la fin de la Restauration?" Obviously Sainte-Beuve can have known them as little as Balzac himself. The duchesses dazzled Balzac's imagina-

tion. They were everything. Jane Austen was simply bored by the Lady Dalrymples. They were nothing.

What is the explanation of Jane Austen's attitude towards rank? I should say a certain irritation with the exaggerated deference paid to it in her time. That time was the period of reaction against the French Revolution, when the English social order seemed to have stiffened itself in an obstinate, wooden conservatism. High Toryism took many forms in literature, romantic with Scott's "Charlie-o'er-the-waterism" down to the merely stupid and aggressive with Gifford's articles in the *Quarterly*. Scott's excessive demonstrations of loyalty when George IV. visited Edinburgh were carried to the verge of the ridiculous, and over it. Thackeray's Steyne and Disraeli's Monmouth belong to that time. They seem incredible now. Even Trollope's Duke of Omnium "dates." The smaller imitators of the "great," the local Baronet or Lady Catherine, living in rural communities self-contained and more or less isolated by the difficulties of road-travel, had far more importance than they have to-day. Jane Austen, an intellectual, with an intellectual's secret contempt for all distinctions save those of the intellect, resented the adulatory homage paid to rank and its complacent acceptance by "the great," who were not intellectually great. Her sense of humour did the rest.

SNOBBERY

We have all perhaps more of the snob in us than we suppose or are willing to admit. Those who are always publicly thanking Heaven that there isn't a ha'porth of the snob in them are the worst. A furtive, discreet, more or less harmless kind of snobbery is that which prompts us to seek the society of the great in fiction. Servant girls used to find out all about the wickedness of baronets in irreproachable evening dress and Lady Jemimas in ropes of pearls by reading the heraldic weekly you have too often heard scornfully named. We gratify much the same taste, only just a shade more delicately, upstairs. Isn't much of the pleasure of reading Balzac, for instance, the joy of being introduced to his wonderful, wayward, half-Madonna, half-Messalina duchesses of the Faubourg St. Germain? We are languid and affected with the Duchesse de Langeais. We share the secrets of the Princesse de Cadignan. And the fun of it is that all the time we have our doubts. *Could* the great ladies of the thirties and forties really have talked and behaved like that? Did a real duchess ever say "hein"? Would a viscountess have said to a baron the second time she set eyes on him, "Vous êtes un amour d'homme"? Or a lady

have asked a viscount, "Sincèrement, petit?" As to the tricks the great dames were up to, the way they flirted their fans, dropped their gloves, just showed the tips of their tiny feet in elegant slippers, raised their eyebrows, pouted and (if so vulgar a word is permissible) leered at their admirers—well, all this is good Balzac, but whether it is good history is, as William IV. (according to Mr. Strachey) was fond of saying, "quite another thing." Anyhow, it appeals to the snob in us, to our curiosity about the manners of the high-born in the most exclusive circles.

The doubt about the authenticity of Balzac's Faubourg is now, however, pretty well resolved. He didn't really know; was imagining, not describing. To be sure, he had some fashionable dames for mistresses—Mme. de Berny, Mme. de Castries, Mme. Hanska (to cut the list short)—but they were fashionable blue-stockings; that is to say, not the best representatives of their order—and, after all, men don't take mistresses for the pleasure of social documentation. It is remarkable that Sainte-Beuve, a contemporary, praised Balzac's picture of the Faubourg for its accuracy. "Qui surtout a plus délicieusement touché les duchesses et les vicomtesses de la fin de la Restauration?" And Brunetière preferred this evidence to the adverse opinion of our "worthy college dons"—an unkind hit at M. Faguet. But Sainte-Beuve and Brunetière were just as much bourgeois—"outsiders" for the Fau-

bourg—as Faguet. So are most of us in this vulgar world. It is not a question of authority but of commonsense; and commonsense decides against the authenticity of Balzac's duchesses and their manners. We can enjoy the picture none the less for the conviction that it is no portrait.

We have another picture of the Faubourg, much more finely drawn and subtly coloured than Balzac's in the later volumes of Marcel Proust. It is a later Faubourg, of course, but not exactly of to-day; it belongs to the period of the Dreyfus agitation. Here is M. Proust's latest volume, No. IV. I am not going to quote its title, for reasons, and am only concerned with the earlier part of the book, which is a continuation of the "Guermantes" theme entered upon in Volume III. Here you have the talk and behaviour of the Faubourg as they are, or at any rate were a few years ago. It is a remarkable picture, and, judged at any rate on internal evidence, bears the mark of truth—truth perhaps slightly warped in one direction which I will indicate later. M. Proust, as I have before had occasion to say, is not one of those moralists who are ashamed of being snobs. He is the real thing and, "like the livin' skillinton, proud o' the title." He takes as much pleasure as Balzac ever did in the coats of arms, the cousinships, the houses and the furniture of his "swells," but he manifestly knows more about them. Manifestly, because his duke and duchess of Guermantes and the rest are not phantoms, chimeras, but definite, solid

individuals. You can walk round them. You suspect that they are portraits, only slightly caricatured if at all, of actual people, with addresses in the Bottin—and sometimes in the Almanach de Gotha.

Of the ducal pair the duke is the less pleasing. First, because he is a man, and therefore the cruder and clumsier of the two. Next, because he is conscious of his birth (we snobs always like the aristocrat who waives his rank), and tries to act up to it by stray dips into the vocabulary of the *ancien régime*. He gets most of his old words wrong, good awkward man, and they do not sort well with his modern slang. But he is very much alive, and the way he acts as "runner-up" to his wife, drawing attention to her epigrams and paradoxes by professing to be shocked at them, makes him quite human and, indeed, familiar to us all. The lady's epigrams and paradoxes are not good. That is one of M. Proust's points—that the cleverness of the Faubourg never quite "comes off" and has to be eked out by social prestige. In truth, their aim is social. When the duchess said that Flaubert, arch-enemy of the bourgeois, was before anything a bourgeois, or that there was a good deal of Italian music in Wagner, she only wanted to make the Princess of Parma "sit up." Her voice was hoarse, conferring on her the distraction of Réjane or a Jeanne Granier. Her language was racy of the soil, which gave her as pure a vocabulary as might have been used by an old French author. (Of a Mme. de Gallardon—"Gallar-

donette est une vieille *poison*.") She added some touches of literature. "But while Mme. de Guermantes was Guermantes almost without trying, her Pailleronism, her taste for Dumas *fils*, were thought out and tried for. As this taste was the opposite of mine, she furnished to my mind literature when she talked of the Faubourg and seemed to me never so stupidly Faubourg as when she talked literature."

Well, I venture to guess that they all talk a little too much literature to be quite *right*. That is where I should say the "personal equation" operates. M. Proust's chief interest is literature, and he naturally inevitably makes his Faubourg talk about what chiefly interests him. It may be that French "swells" talk more literature than English "swells" (who, within my own—obviously limited—observation, talk precious little); but hardly, I imagine, to that extent.

MORE PROUST

THREE more volumes are out of that remarkable work of fiction, or fiction blended with fact, called "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu." I have been told that M. Proust's hours and habits of work are even more eccentric than Balzac's; but he can hardly have turned out these 700 pages of what is perhaps the most complicated writing to be read (and sometimes only to be made out with prayer and fasting) in French literature to-day without a good deal of steady industry. Perhaps the reading is a little less difficult than it was, not because the style has changed, but because the reader has got accustomed to it. Of course, the people will always be numerous who "can't read" Proust, just as there are many who "can't read" Henry James and were many who "couldn't read" Meredith. And these will always suspect the others, the passionate readers, the devotees, of affectation. The right attitude for these others, I try to remember, is one of humility. For when I think of the number of books—novels, poems, critical essays—loudly vaunted by the reviewers and one's club friends that I myself find I can't read I feel much chastened. Horace Walpole was fond of quoting a saying of

Charles II. about a certain foolish preacher, who was nevertheless popular with his congregation: "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense." That may account for the fierce tribe of Proustians. His nonsense suits our nonsense. And having done my best thus to placate the still fiercer tribe of Anti-Proustians (it is the privilege of all "Antis" to be "werry fierce") I must go on to say that my own nonsense is so bad a case that, not being able so far to get the new Proust volumes in London, I couldn't wait, but borrowed them from a luckier friend, who had got them, by special favour, from Paris.

One must be frank. There is an ingredient in M. Proust's later volumes that one finds it very difficult to "stick." It came into the story with M. de Charlus, who is, surely, one of the most repulsive brutes ever conceived by a novelist. This man and his vices are, as people say, "relentlessly" analysed. So long as the analysis is well done, it is the French tradition that you may analyse anything. Ours is—or was, for there are signs of a change—different. It is an old, old question, and there is no need to reopen it. I will content myself with saying that the analysable and the unanalysable are just, for me, matters of personal taste, and my taste is not catholic enough to take in the peculiarities of that filthy brute and amazing cad, M. de Charlus. That the author finds so evident a pleasure in patiently analysing and faithfully reporting such a character

leaves me stupefied. But there the thing is, " foxing," as it were, page after page—and I won't utter another word on the subject.

I spoke of the whole book as a blend of fiction and fact. No doubt most of the ostensibly fictitious people are " portraits "—though, as I don't happen to be a member of the French aristocracy, I don't know the originals—but many real names are introduced. M. Proust is rather fond of dragging in his English friends. Princess Bibesco is introduced, oddly enough, into his *pastiche* of Saint Simon. Now we have an equally odd allusion to Mr. Aldous Huxley—" L'illustre Huxley (celui dont le neveu occupe actuellement une place prépondérante dans le monde de la littérature anglaise) raconte. . . . " A preponderant place ! This kind of judgment on English literature sets one wondering as to the value of M. Proust's critical estimates generally. Mr. Aldous Huxley is one of the most brilliant among our younger writers, as I guess from the only book of his that I happen to have read, " Crome Yellow." I believe three others stand to his credit, but with his keen sense of humour, he must, I feel sure, be the first to smile at M. Proust's fantastic appraisal. What makes the compliment even more embarrassing is that M. Proust by and by uses precisely the same phrase in connexion with the egregious M. de Charlus—" M. de Charlus savait qu'il était un Guermantes occupant une place prépondérante dans cette fête." But perhaps M. Proust, with his

"place prépondérante," has only been pulling the reader's leg, or Mr. Aldous Huxley's.

He is still devoting his chief attention to the French aristocracy, as Balzac did before him. Both writers are perhaps a little overcome by their subject as professional authors who describe "society" are apt to be. Indeed, I am afraid Thackeray would have called M. Proust a "snob." He is so anxious to mark the distinction between the genuine article and the imitation, the real "swells" and the hangers-on. But the usual reproach brought against "society" novelists, that they are writing from outside, certainly won't hold against M. Proust. Take this :—

> I was beginning to know the exact value of the spoken or dumb language of aristocratic amiability, an amiability happy to pour balm on the feeling of inferiority of its object, but not, however, to the extent of dissipating the feeling, for in that case it would cease to have any point. "But you are as good as ourselves, if not better," the Guermantes in every action seemed to say ; and said it in the nicest fashion that can be imagined, to be liked and admired, but not to be believed ; that you perceived the fictitious character of this amiability, was what they called good breeding ; belief in its reality, bad.

I think we all of us know that kind of aristocratic amiability.

But it is not everybody who knows, though the wise ones may suspect, that the social receptions that look most "swagger" in the Press list of guests are not so in fact. The public, not admitted to these things, but reading about them in the *Gaulois*

or the *Figaro* (says M. Proust), is impressed by lists, accurate enough, of big names. They do not know the intrigues, the services, the prayers that have brought the " great " there, and that such entertainments are not really the " smart " ones. The really " smart " ones are not advertised in the Press, and the public know nothing about them. You can see M. Proust's disdainful smile at the ignorance of " outsiders " about this important matter—for he evidently thinks it of the first importance. That is why, I suggest, Thackeray would have called him a snob. But accept his snobbery, I mean don't distress yourself about it, and you will find his aristocrats not only " curious " (in the usual as well as in the special or bookseller's sense), but deliciously real, just as Balzac's were deliciously romantic.

M. Proust's reflections " by the way "—and I am only browsing here and there, not reviewing the book—are often stimulating. Here is one, which is at any rate new to me, *à propos* of the resemblance in a daguerreotype between a certain old duke and a plain *bourgeois :* that social, even individual, differences melt at a distance into the uniformity of an epoch. The truth is that the similarity of costume and also the reflection in the countenance of the spirit of the epoch count for so much more in any one than his caste—this being important, really, only in the self-consciousness of the man, and the imagination of other people—that, in order to see how a *Grand Seigneur* of the time of Louis Philippe

is less different from a *bourgeois* of the time of Louis Philippe than from a *Grand Seigneur* of the time of Louis XV., it is unnecessary to walk through the Louvre. . . . And now I must *read* the three new volumes, with as blind an eye as I can manage for M. de Charlus.

A NEW PSYCHOMETRY

To judge from the newspapers there have been tremendous " crises " in public affairs lately : the triumph of Fascismo in Italy, the Lausanne Conference, the English elections. But to many of us the great events are merely spectacular ; they pass rapidly across the screen, while the band plays irrelevant scraps of syncopated music, and seem no more real than any other of the adventures, avowedly fictitious, that are " filmed " for our idle hours. They don't, save on reflection and much diligent pondering of leading articles, come home to our business and bosoms. But one announcement in *The Times* shocked many of us with a sudden, absurdly indignant bewilderment like a foul blow : I mean the death of Marcel Proust. It is not only absurd but impious to be indignant with the decrees of Fate. The wise throughout the ages have prescribed for us our proper behaviour in the face of such an event ; and most of us find the prescription quite useless. But, on the death of an author, there is this peculiar consolation that never fails ; his work lives absolutely unaffected by his death. We can light the lamp, make a clear fire, and sit down to the book with the old thrill. There is only the thought that

we must be content with what we have, that we are to get no more from that hand. With Marcel Proust, however, it seems that we are spared even that mortification. He has left behind him the completion of " A la Recherche du Temps Perdu." This is great news. The announcements from the press of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* will be eagerly awaited. Even a new Anatole France is not so important an event.

It has been said that Proust will go down to posterity as the author of one book. This is only true in a literal sense. For the many volumes of " A la Recherche " that already crowd the shelves are several " books " in one. It is not a " story " but a panorama of many stories. Indeed, who reads Proust for the " story " ? His book is really a picture of the modern world and the modern spirit, and that is its peculiar fascination for us. There are " morbid " elements in it, to be sure—you cannot read a page without seeing that it must have been written by some one who was anything but a normal, healthy human being—and it is not for nothing that *The Times* has compared him to Petronius Arbiter. But one of the advantages of this hyperæsthesia is a heightened sensibility for *everything*, the perception and accurate notation of innumerable details in thought and feeling that escape a normal observer.

Take, for instance, the account of the famous author " Bergotte." Proust, little more than a child, but already his ardent reader, meets him at

lunch. And, first, the boy's imagined author, a "langoureux vieillard," has to give place to the reality, much younger, a little man with a nose like a snail-shell and a chin-tuft. Then comes an elaborate description of his spoken diction, pronunciation, etc., and an attempt to reconcile these with the peculiarities of his written style. Special "notes":

> Doubtless, to separate himself from the previous generation, too fond of abstractions and grand commonplaces, when Bergotte wanted to speak well of a book, what he quoted was always some scene with an image, some picture without rational meaning. "Ah! that's good!" he said, "the little girl in an orange shawl"; or again, "there's a good passage where a regiment is passing through a town." For style, he was not exactly of his time (and remaining, for that matter, very exclusively of his own country, he detested Tolstoi, George Eliot, Ibsen, and Dostoievsky), for the word which always recurred when he wanted to praise a style was the word "mild." "Yes, after all, I prefer the Châteaubriand of *Atala* to the Châteaubriand of *René*, it seems to me milder." He said the word like a doctor who is told by a patient that milk upsets him and who answers, "all the same, it is very mild." And it is true that there was in Bergotte's style a sort of harmony like that for which the ancients praised certain of their orators in a way it is difficult for us to understand, accustomed as we are to our modern language where such effects are not aimed at.

It is, further, explained how this man of genius came to pay court to his intellectual inferiors with an eye on the Academy and how, while his own private morals were bad, the moral tone of his books was of the loftiest. "Maybe it is only in lives really vicious that the moral problem can be posited with all its anxious force. And to this problem the artist gives a solution not in the plane of his individual life

but of what is for him his true life, a general, literary solution. As the great doctors of the Church often began, while good themselves, by knowing the sins of all men, and drew from that knowledge their personal sanctity, so often great artists, while bad themselves, use their vices to arrive at a conception of the universal moral law." Nor is the portrait finished yet. Bergotte was at bottom a man who really loved only certain images and to compose and paint them in words. Had he had to defend himself before a tribunal, in spite of himself he would have chosen his words, not for their effect on the judge but in view of images which the judge would certainly never have perceived.

It is this extraordinarily minute " psychometry " that is the peculiar mark of Proust's work. The sensations Swann derives from a sonata of Vinteuil's, the special quality of Elstir's pictures of the sea shore, the effect of afternoon light in the church at Combray, glimpses of military life at Doncières, with its contrast of the First Empire aristocracy and the *ancien régime*—it is the first time that such things as these have been put into words and brought intimately home to you. Then there are the studies of *le grande monde*—the " gilded saloons," as Disraeli would have called them, of the Guermantes and the rest. Here you have a picture of the Faubourg St. Germain that is as true, you are assured, as Balzac's was false. Heraldry—of all things !—was a hobby of Proust's ; he is said to have known the armorial

bearings of every noble family in France. His Baron de Charlus must, one fears, be a portrait; nothing quite so tortuously and perversely wicked can ever have been merely invented.

I confess "ma mère" and "ma grandmère" bore me. And there is just a little too much of "le petit clan." But in this vast banquet of modern life and thought and sensation there is plenty of room to pick and choose. Since Henry Bernstein first mentioned Proust's name to me in the year before the War I have returned again and again for a tit-bit to that feast. Proust is dead; but we can still go on enjoying his work. In that sense the cry of the child in Maeterlinck's "Oiseau Bleu" is true enough. "There is no death."

PROUST THE MAN

The pious tribute which *La Nouvelle Revue Française* has paid to the memory of Marcel Proust—a special double-number of some 340 pages—is almost too profuse a compliment. Personal reminiscences from dozens of the novelist's friends are followed by appreciations, theories, speculations, from scores of his critics. You can hardly see the wood for the trees. It seems an obvious course to consider the man and his books separately. But the dividing line is not so easy to draw. "You probably agree with me," wrote Proust to a friend, "that the wisest ones, the most poetic, the best, are not those who put into their work all their poetry, all their kindness, and all their science, but those who know how to put a little of these into their life, too."

Certainly, he never allowed his way of living to become pedestrianly prosaic. You remember how lavishly his "double" in *Guermantes* used to tip the lift-boys at the Balbec hotel. This was a romantic weakness of his own. Dining one night with a friend at the Ritz, he, as usual, gave away in tips all the cash in his pocket. This he found out when he

reached the porter at the door, of whom, accordingly, he borrowed fifty francs—and at once handed them to him as a tip. His wretched health forbade him to live as other men. As he could bear neither sunshine nor noise, he turned night into day, inviting his friends to dine at the Ritz at 10 (and coming himself an hour late), and lived in a room lined with cork. At the hotel at Cabourg he engaged five rooms, one for use, the other four adjoining, so as to be sure of silence. At midsummer he would wear a fur coat and a respirator, and all his windows on the garden side were tight shut, for fear of hay fever. He had constant suffocating fits from asthma. It was as coddled and artificial an invalid's existence as Pope's or Heine's.

With this naturally went the caprices and the morbid sensitiveness of the invalid. At a dinner he gave in compliment to Mme. de Noailles he decorated the table with every single flower that she had named in her more recent poems. He would write letters of passionate reproach to his friends for offences they had unwittingly committed ; and then there would be a magnificent feast of reconciliation. He was fond of Larue's—and it *is* a cosy restaurant—and there he would press upon you champagne and wonderful fruit out of season. Like Mrs. Tanqueray he " adored fruit, especially when it's expensive." But he was no gross materialist. He loved the country and the seaside, and was made ill by both ; one day he decided to leave Paris for Normandy in a

closed carriage because he longed to see the apple trees in bloom, even through glass. And this nature-worshipper made a hobby of genealogy, and revelled in the Almanach de Gotha. Mr. Douglas Ainslie gives a pleasant glimpse of him arriving, late of course, at the Café Weber, with his overcoat collar turned up, saying he cannot stay because he has an appointment, staying till everybody else has left, then taking his friend home in a taxi and, at the door, keeping the taxi for ever, while he carries on an endless discussion. "Je le vois toujours," says another friend, "arrivant par le long couloir du Ritz, une heure en retard sur le rendez-vous, un peu hagard, éperdu, descendant de son rêve, comme un aviateur embrouillardé qui hésite a atterrir." You may say that there was a touch of Peter Pan in him, something of the Epicurean, perhaps even of the voluptuary, something, too, of the ascetic and the martyr.

Of course there were always the silly people who persisted in finding the "originals" of his characters, and it annoyed him. He writes to a friend:—"Hélas quand, irrité de voir les gens me dire: 'Ne vous défendez pas, la Duchesse de Guermantes c'est Madame G.' (alors que la Duchesse de Guermantes qui est tout le monde et personne est en tout cas exactement le contraire de Madame G.), j'écrivais dans les 'Œuvres Libres' que les gens se rendent si peu compte de la création artistique qu'ils s'imaginent qu' on fait entrer une personne, telle qu'elle,

dans un livre, je ne savais pas qu'une femme (pas du monde celle-la) prétendrait se reconnaître en Odette de Crécy qui est exactement son contraire, etc., etc. Ces ridicules assimilations m'irritent." Was there ever a modern novelist who escaped these " ridiculous assimilations," from Jane Austen to Balzac ? By the way, Proust shares one notable characteristic with Balzac : the habit of practically rewriting his text in the proof. A specimen page of typescript is given, wherein a rivulet of text runs through a meadow of marginal corrections.

To pass from the personal reminiscences and simple facts about Proust to the various criticisms of his work is, I am bound to confess, a painful experience. Far be it from me to depreciate the art of criticism. But five-and-twenty criticisms at once, from all possible and impossible points of view, are a little more than I can swallow. Here are the theories of many worthy gentlemen, laboriously or brilliantly or paradoxically constructed, each of them compact, impeccably logical, fitting easily into the waistcoat pocket, about a man who could write any of their heads off. I begin to understand why critics generally get themselves disliked. Each of these seems to be more preoccupied with himself and his ingenious explanations than with simple straightforward enjoyment of Proust. They thrust themselves between me and the book ; they put me out ; they spoil sport. With what joy one turns from them to Proust himself ! Here are two fragments

from future volumes of " A la Recherche," just to whet one's appetite : " Une matinée au Trocadéro " and " La Mort de Bergotte." And, to finish up, there is a detailed bibliography for which all good Proustians will offer grateful thanks.

"E.V." AND PROUST

THERE is one saying that I often wish Elia had added to his essays on Popular Fallacies: Easy writing makes hard reading. In the long run, if a man writes easily, it is because he is, like the M.P. who introduced the Liquor Bill, full of his subject; or, even if he be full of emptiness, he is in a blithe mood. In either case the reader profits; he will have gained something, either knowledge or, what is much better, happiness. No easy writings make more happy readings for me than do those of Mr. E. V. Lucas. (It is easy to see why, with E.V.L. at the back of my head, my thoughts turned to Lamb.) I have never seen Mr. Lucas write, but I am sure that he does it easily. (If you come to that, one never does, in actual life, see an author writing. One reads how Flaubert did it—seeking *le mot juste* in agony and then erasing the whole sentence in despair—it must have been deadly to watch. I have seen Shakespeare writing on the stage, with his eyes cast up to Heaven and swinging a formidable quill pen as though it were a mashie, and I have seen Mr. Shaw—or was it Mr. Zangwill?—writing, like mad, on the film; and in neither case was seeing believing.) Mr. Lucas cannot but write easily because he

writes so much. I have counted over forty "other works by the same author" on the fly-leaf of his new book "Genevra's Money." This is the sort of thing to make an idler envious and ashamed; and I think it speaks well for my candour that I am willing to admit the happiness that this indefatigable and easy writer's works give me. Mr. Lucas is, I know, universally praised, and perhaps I ought to have taken the other line and hinted that "some of the praise has been injudicious," as is said by a reviewer in the *Literary Supplement* about another writer very dear to me, M. Marcel Proust. Well, well, there are some inexorably judicious temperaments to which any hearty praise seems "injudicious." What did Vauvenargues say? "It is a great sign of mediocrity always to praise moderately."

Of all the ties that bind a reader to his author there is none so pleasant as the discovery of some intimate personal experience shared between them. I shall never forget my delight when I found that the shop (Twining's in the Strand) where I happened to get my tea was the identical one where, a century and more ago, Jane Austen used to buy hers. And judge of my gratification at finding that Mr. Lucas was once upon a time as fond as I was of potatoes baked in a bonfire. If I have hitherto kept this trait of childhood from the knowledge of my friends, it is because I have supposed there to be something perverse and morbid in it (for the pota-

toes were never quite " done " in the middle) ; but the uncle in " Genevra's Money " is quite open about it :—

> Suddenly a whiff of burning leaves mixed with the keen air, and in a moment I was a child again, so curiously can a scent restore the past. No, not restore it—no such happy fortune as that—but recall it.
>
> In a corner of our old home garden there was a continuous rubbish fire—and about it was our favourite gathering place, our refuge from elders and visitors, our senate, and our restaurant, for we ate there, too, chiefly potatoes cooked under the ashes. Food for the gods—there is nothing with such flavour to-day : *cordons bleus* wear out their lives in vain. We talked there, plotted there, hid there, sulked there, cried there, railed there against fate and the conspiracy to misunderstand the young, and there in penitential mood promised ourselves we would be better.
>
> The pungent aromatic odours of burning vegetation have never failed to bring back the old impressions, not only of the garden corner, and the actual triumphs and tribulations it witnessed, but of the house, too, the family, the neighbourhood. One whiff is the Open Sesame to so many of the doors of the brain.

If I have spoken of Mr. Lucas's writing as easy, I hope no one will have understood me to imply that it is casual. Consider the cunningly smooth rhythm of these simple sentences. In particular, look at the successive positions of the word " there " in the second paragraph and try to devise a better arrangement, if you can.

I have spoken of Marcel Proust. Within the last few days there has appeared an English translation, by Mr. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, of " Du Côté de chez Swann," which has given me the surprise of my life. I should have said, beforehand, that anything like

an adequate rendering of " Swann " in English was impossible. Even French admirers of M. Proust complain that he is *d'une lecture pénible*, and that French so " painful," phrases so tortuous, so long-winded, so involved, could ever be turned into painless English, without loss of equivalence, seemed a ludicrous expectation. Nevertheless, Mr. Scott Moncrieff has worked the miracle. Indeed, he has succeeded in reversing the proposition to which I began by alluding, and hard writing has become easy reading. (I enter just one protest, in passing, against the title " Swann's Way." Why not " On the way to Swann's " ?)

Let me quote a passage which is a kind of parallel to Mr. Lucas's baked-potato recollections of childhood :—

And suddenly the memory returns. The taste was that of the little crumb of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before church-time), when I went to say good day to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-flower tea. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it ; perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the interval, without tasting them, on the trays in pastry-cooks' windows, that their image had dissociated itself from those Combray days to take its place among others more recent ; perhaps because of those memories, so long abandoned and put out of mind, nothing now survived, everything was scattered ; the forms of things, including that of the little scallop-shell of pastry, so richly sensual under its severe, religious folds, were either obliterated or had become so long dormant as to have lost the power of expansion which would have allowed them to resume their place in my consciousness. But when from a long-

distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, still, alone, more fragile, but with more vitality, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest ; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.

One detail teases me. The translation (Vol. I., p. 199) gives : " I knew that Mlle. Swann used often to go and spend a few days at *Laon*, etc." The original in my edition (Bernard Grasset : 1914) runs : " Je savais que Mlle. Swann allait souvent y passer, &c.," and the last word in the previous sentence is " Chartres "—I can only presume that, in later editions, M. Proust has substituted " Laon " for " Chartres." But what can have been his reason for thus tampering with the topography of his tale ?

MISREPRESENTED FRANCE

It has lately been suggested that the reason why there are more breaches of the Seventh Commandment in French fiction than in French fact is to be found in French novelists' lack of talent. In other words, Benjamin Constant wrote "Adolphe" and George Sand "Indiana" and Balzac "La Cousine Bette" and Gustave Flaubert "Madame Bovary" and Anatole France "Le Lys Rouge" because they were bunglers. This is a novel and an engaging theory of French literature. "Novelists and playwrights, fearing that if they aimed at truth they would be merely dull, hope to escape dullness by imagining a world in which every one breaks, or hopes to break, the Seventh Commandment." Hope springs eternal in the human breast: French novelists hope to escape dullness and the creatures of their imagination hope to break the Seventh Commandment. Their readers, too, are full of hope: "the mere expectation of a breach arouses their interest." It looks as though all France were hoping, and hoping in vain, "because breaches of the Seventh Commandment are not interesting in themselves." (The writer must mean, in fiction; for if they were not interesting in fact, there would

be no temptation to commit them, and no need for the Seventh Commandment at all.) But disappointed hope is compensated by self-deception all round. The readers " do not know this " (viz., that breaches, &c., are not interesting) and " never discover that immorality can be, and often is, as dull as inopportune moralizing." Altogether, France seems to be in a queer state. The novelists hope to escape dullness by pitching on a subject which is really not interesting, though their readers don't know it and never discover it.

Anyhow, it is the fault of the novelists, who wish to " escape from the hard task of telling the truth in fiction." But the complaint is not that they don't tell the truth about breaches of the Seventh Commandment, but that they are too fond of telling the truth about the people who break it, when they ought to be telling the truth about the people who don't—that it is more honoured by fiction in the breach than in the observance. The fact is, novelists wish to be read, and readers don't care about happy, virtuous, unimpeded love-affairs. When you read that the couple in the tale " lived happily ever afterwards " you know that you are at the last page; uninterrupted happiness would be too dull a subject. " Why, Mr. Rogers," asked a young lady of the poet, " do you always say such disagreeable things ? " " My dear, I have a very weak voice, and if I didn't say disagreeable things nobody would hear me." There are as many happy marriages in France as

elsewhere ; but nobody wants to hear about them. They are insipid. On the other hand, even in pudibund Albion, divorce cases get full reports in the newspapers and are eagerly read ; whereas announcements of golden weddings have to be paid for as advertisements. You must blame human nature.

The late M. Brunetière, who was a man of theories, had one applicable to this. He said that the *sine qua non* of a dramatic story was struggle, the conflict of a will against obstacles. In *l'amour*, as the writer I began by quoting calls it, apparently to indicate that there is a peculiarly French form of the universal passion, the Seventh Commandment offers a pretty considerable obstacle. Others are conscience, the arm of the law, and the coy reluctance of " elegant females." In readable novels and actable plays the course of true love must never run smooth, but always up against one or other or all of these obstacles.

After all, the novelist is not a historian, and it is not the business of French novelists to see that their novels draw an accurate picture of French society as a whole, with all the happy homes as carefully marked as the unhappy on the map. History deals with our actions and the event, fiction with our desires and our secret heart. It was a humdrum respectable paterfamilias who said his ideal was " to live with a duchess in guilty splendour." Fiction is read because it is a mode of living, vicariously, these wayward, romantic dreams. This is forgotten by

the worthy people who complain that French novelists " misrepresent " French life. Life as it has to be lived in this workaday world, whether in France or elsewhere, is very different from life as it is dreamed.

The old complaint of " misrepresenting " modern France is now beginning to be heard about the great novelist just dead, Marcel Proust. An eminent English novelist tackles me about this. He says Proust is not entitled to the highest rank in literature because his representation of French society is partial only, and therefore unfair ; that he writes only of the Faubourg St. Germain set, which stands for the " dead " France, and not of the " live " people, soldiers and statesmen and others, who have made and are making France to-day. And he contrasts him with Balzac, who aimed at giving a panorama of the whole social scheme. Well, it strikes me as an unfortunate comparison. Balzac's " Comédie Humaine " was like Zola's " Rougon-Macquart family," a mere afterthought, a specious formula designed to suggest continuity and completeness in what was merely casual and temperamental. As a " representation of France " it is not to be taken seriously ; what it represents—like any other work of art—is its author's genius. His men of action, his statesmen, his men of affairs, are, frankly, preposterous. Proust never set out to " represent " France ; he represented the side of its social life that happened to interest him. What he

did magnificently represent was the hitherto unexplored in human nature and the human mind. As M. Jacques Rivière says of him in the current *Nouvelle Revue Française*, " the discoveries he has made in the human mind and heart will one day be considered as capital and of the same rank as those of Kepler in astronomy, Claude Bernard in physiology or Auguste Comte in the interpretation of the sciences." That strikes me as better work than producing a portrait-group of " Modern France," with General Lyautey arm-in-arm with Marshal Foch, and M. Clemenceau putting on his celebrated pearl-grey gloves.

REALITY

Let us respectfully leave the philosophers to go on producing their innumerable and contradictory definitions of reality. Socrates, as Addison reminds us, brought down philosophy from Heaven to inhabit among men; but nobody has brought it down to inhabit among newspaper readers. It is sufficient that we know how to distinguish the real from the fictitious or know, at any rate, that there is a distinction. Facts are the things that have happened, and they are recorded in history; fiction is what has not happened, and it is recorded in epics, romances, plays, novels. Some people like to put it in another way. They say that we apprehend the world, whether real or imaginary, by intuition. If we go further and apply the criterion of reality we form concepts, and our intuition has become perception. History, then, is the record of perceptions; fiction the record of pure intuitions. But perception is an active process, and a fatiguing; pure intuition is passive and soothing. Hence more novels than histories are applied for at the popular libraries. Yet there are some histories that are as amusing as novels—Gibbon and Macaulay in their day were found on ladies' tea-tables—and many novels that

are as dull as histories. The truth is, I think, that most people are indifferent to the criterion of reality. If Julian the Apostate and William III. had been entirely imaginary characters we should still enjoy reading the pages devoted to them. For what interests us is not the fact, as fact, the record of perception, but its artistic presentation, the record of intuition.

Hence the distinction between the novel and history, fiction and fact, is artificial, constructive, theoretical; in practical experience we are quite willing to lose sight of it. When Marcel Proust's unnamed "moi" (in "Swann") was reading a novel in the garden at Combray, the novelist's landscape obliterated for him the real one, *was* for him "reality." So it was with the novelist's characters. And M. Proust goes on to indicate a theory of the novel :—

> All the feelings we experience from the joy or the misfortune of a real personage are only produced in us through the medium of an image of that joy or that misfortune; the ingenuity of the first novelist consisted in recognizing that, in the apparatus of our emotions, the image being the sole essential element, the simplification which there would be in purely and simply suppressing the real personages would be a decisive step to perfection. A real being, profoundly as we may sympathize with him, is in great part perceived by our senses, that is to say, remains opaque to us, offers a dead weight that our sensibility cannot lift. The novelist's "find" was the idea of replacing these parts impenetrable to the mind by an equal quantity of immaterial parts, that our mind can assimilate.

In other words, the first novelist had the ingenuity to substitute pure intuitions for perceptions.

Now, that the novelist, like every other artist, expresses for us pure intuitions we knew, but is it true that these took the place of perceptions? I think not. For that would imply that history preceded fiction—or, to give it its finer name, poetry—whereas nothing is more certain than that mankind began with poetry, legend, myth—*i.e.*, with pure intuition, and only later learned to apply the criterion of reality, *i.e.*, to write history. In fact, the world began its life as every individual begins his life without applying that criterion, without distinguishing between intuitions and perceptions. And even when history came into being, it was long before it learnt to apply rigorously the criterion of reality; it was largely compounded of myth, unverified legend. We all remember from our school-days the speeches Greek and Latin historians were fond of putting into the mouths of national heroes—speeches which the historians calmly invented, as appropriate to the character and the circumstances. "Reality," as such, was with them a secondary consideration.

I submit, then, that the appeal to the emotions which is called fiction was not, as M. Proust's theory of the "first novelist" would imply, evolved out of the appeal to our sense of reality which is called history, but, on the contrary, preceded it and thereafter was often indistinguishable from it. Mankind is interested in its emotions before it is concerned in its perception of reality. And that is why truth of

fact in so-called " historical " novels and plays counts for so little. Who cares a pin about the undoubted fact that the " real " Macbeth, the " real " Brutus, were utterly unlike those characters in Shakespeare, or that the " real " people of the " Ivanhoe " period were utterly unlike Scott's picture of them ? All we need do is to distinguish in our minds between the two ; to enjoy fiction as such and not to let it masquerade as history. There are, for example, several portraits of Mary Queen of Scots, and no two of them are alike ; let us, then, reject them as portraits and accept them for what merits they have as pictures. There are, I am aware, a few people whose passion for " reality " obscures their sense of art, people who cannot be interested in Harold Skimpole until they have identified him with Leigh Hunt, people who laboriously seek the " original " of Falstaff, people who are concerned about the precise locality of Mansfield Park and wonder whether Donwell Abbey was nearer Cobham or Little Bookham, people who look for old Goriot's *pension* when they go to Paris and Juliet's tomb when they visit Verona. But these are amiable eccentrics.

PLAYER AND PART

It is a very old grievance against the critics of the theatre that they do imperfect justice to the players. Is it ill-will? Is it ignorance? To listen to some players you would conclude it beyond a doubt to be ill-will. With them, you see, it is always a personal question. It cannot, unhappily, be otherwise, for their persons—their voices, their gait, the tilt of their noses—are the primary elements of their part. Thus, it has been laid down that no actress is fit to play Juliet until she is too old to look it. Well, you say she *is* too old, and you find at once that you are no gentleman. Critical ill-will towards the players, however, I believe to be in fact very rare. A vague prejudice there may be, once in a blue moon, prejudice born of some obscure physical antipathy. A certain *timbre* of voice gets on your nerves or you cannot abide a squint. Your best plan will be to confess your prejudice frankly, and allow for it.

The other explanation, ignorance, seems to be favoured by Mr. Granville Barker. He has been asking for more intelligent and more informed criticism of acting. "So many dramatic critics," he says, "have the habit of confusing the performance with the part. They give one the impression that

they neither know nor care anything about acting as acting. It takes the heart out of the player when good work is not recognized. It is not that praise alone is needed. The actor wants the tonic of reproof for bad work, just as surely as he needs the reward of praise when he has done well."

This seems worth a little investigation. Let me at once admit that critics are not immune from the tendency of all playgoers to confuse player and part. For obvious reasons the tendency is more marked over new plays than old. With an old play you know what you are going to see. You have the text of *Hamlet* before you and can distinguish between it and the actor's interpretation. The point, I notice, occurred to the hero of that remarkable book of Marcel Proust's, "A l'ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs," when he was going to see La Berma for the first time. Should it be in a new play or an old one ?

If I went to hear La Berma in a new play, it would not be easy for me to judge of her art, her diction, since I should not be able to distinguish between a text that I didn't know in advance, and what would be added to it by intonations and gestures that would seem to me to be part of it ; while the old plays that I knew by heart appeared to me as vast reserved and prepared spaces, where I might appreciate in full liberty the inventions that La Berma would cover them with, like fresco-work, out of the perpetual "finds" of her inspiration.

There is every temptation to confuse player with new part, about which the player is himself your immediate source of information. I am not speak-

ing of crude, obvious incongruities. If the actor utters words of tender love with gestures of loathing you easily suspect there is something wrong. But in practice you have to deal with finer shades, disparities between the player's temperament and the playwright's vision, say, or may be the forcing of a fresh and delicate conception into one of the player's sets of hard ready-made moulds. Well, you have often only your own imagination to guide you, in sympathetic reflection of the playwright's. Just there is the occasion for criticism to prove its validity. But it is not easy.

It is, particularly, not easy with the greatest artists. There are some misinterpretations that artistically transcend the original text. Many of Duse's performances, for example, seemed to me to do so. Often she was finer, more delicate, more distinguished than her part. Obviously this was so with the parts that one knew beforehand, with Marguérite Gautier, with Paula Tanqueray, with Magda. But how exquisite her misinterpretations were ! If there was a loss of realism, what a gain there was in sheer beauty ! Now take her in what was virtually a new part for Londoners, her Mirandolina in *La Locandiera*. We all hailed that as a masterpiece. Yet I suspect, or rather I am sure, that this fragile Tanagra-statuette was by no means the true innlandlady of Goldoni. The truth is, a player of supreme inspiration and burning vitality *re-creates* the playwright's creations. You are carried away

by the splendour of the actual impersonation, and if reminded that you are not distinguishing between player and part, are ready to cry, impatiently, so much the worse for the part !

But as a rule it is no question of a Berma (by which name M. Proust is obviously indicating Sarah Bernhardt) or of a Duse, but of humbler everyday players whose good work, Mr. Barker says, is often not recognized because so many dramatic critics fail to distinguish between performance and part. With all respect I should be inclined to reply that this failure—which does occur, I freely admit it—is really the playwright's grievance rather than the player's. Far more often than not it is the player who gets what should be the author's credit. Far more often than not you say the player is good when it is really the part that is good. True, they may both be good ; a great part may be greatly played. But we all know of the great parts that, proverbially, no actor has ever failed in—actor-proof parts, as the actors themselves call them. Nor is failure to distinguish between player and part always uncritical. For what is the very quintessence of acting but the effort to bring about complete identity between the two ? If the actor *is* the part, so that you fail to distinguish one from the other, then he has achieved what he set out to do and he deserves all the praise he gets. But you may have good acting in a bad part ? Undoubtedly, and in that case the task of distinguishing between player and part is much easier.

For a bad part is, precisely, an incoherent, not solidly imagined, part, a part with which the actor cannot identify himself. The better the acting, the more clearly the incoherence of the part is revealed. In such a case the art of the actor stands out all the more conspicuously from the very sense of its effort, of its uphill work. I conclude, then, that on the whole the actor gets more than his share of praise ; he often gets the praise due to the playwright, and seldom, if ever, the blame.

But, says Mr. Barker, the actor wants the tonic of reproof for bad work. Ah ! here we are on delicate ground. Dramatic critics are very chary of administering that tonic. There is, for one thing, the dreadful personal question that I began by hinting at. For another there is a certain sense of human fellowship, if you don't like to call it Christian charity. Critics cannot go through this world under glass cases and must needs be acquainted with many of the actors they criticize. Is it culpable to shrink from administering the tonic of reproof to an actor whom you know as an excellent fellow at the club and the sole support of a family at home ? Oh yes, the critic should, of course, be inflexible and infallible. Nevertheless, " with such a being as man in such a world as the present one," it is small wonder that critical tonics are apt to be disguised. Actors who would rant the hind leg off a donkey are described as " energetic," and Hamlets who (as Johnson said of himself) would frighten the ghost

are said to lack some of the engaging charm of Shakespeare's "sweet prince." Well, well, there's no great harm done. I fancy the public is not deceived. It probably knows how to read between the adjectives.

SOME OPEN SECRETS

Discoursing of various reasons for lenity in criticizing the players, I said that the public were probably not deceived, but were able to read between the critic's adjectives. There are cases, however, where deception must occur, where criticism cannot help being misleading, unless the public are warned to be on their guard, and a little investigation of these may perhaps supply the needed warning.

I hope I shall not be accused of turning up my shirt sleeves like the conjuror and crying, "There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen," while all the time I am concealing the bowl of goldfish in my coat tail pocket. After all, criticism is not an exercise in voluntary deception. Nevertheless, there are plays which, I know, it is difficult, and others which, I believe, it is impossible for the critic not to misrepresent. I want to do justice to playwrights who run the risk, in certain classes of work, of not having justice done them.

A good example of one of these classes is an American comedy at the Savoy, *Too Many Cooks*. In criticizing this play I spoke of its artlessness, its naivety, its simple-mindedness. Probably I dwelt unduly upon these characteristics, or else, as so often

happens, in the very effort not to dwell unduly upon them exaggerated other qualities of the play; but the result in either case would be very much the same thing, a loss of critical balance, a lopsided account of the work. In either case the reader would get an impression of the play more or less out of plumb. This sort of *contretemps* happens for the simple reason that the critic is not the average playgoer. He is less the creature of the primary instincts and first impressions; he is informed, and, as a rule, jaded by a larger experience; the broader commonplaces of life have been played and replayed too often for him on the stage; he wants something to break his mind upon; hence his repugnance to what he calls naivety in stage work.

The average theatre audience has, however, no such repugnance, but a hearty liking rather. And there are playwrights whose mental point of view is precisely that of the average audience. Now the critic's first business is to put himself at the author's point of view. Indeed, that is the foundation of right criticism in all the arts. And that is what makes the critic's task difficult when, as in the present case, his mind and temperament are not—what shall I say?—so fresh, so ingenuous, as the author's. The critic, only too conscious of the gap, making a violent effort to bridge it, gets in the end a strained and false effect.

So, again, when he is confronted with other kinds of naivety, as, *e.g.*, the naivety of popular melo-

drama. What moves and excites the public here strikes him as merely funny ; in describing the play he takes refuge in irony, which is an admission that his point of view is neither the public's nor the playwright's. He had far better do that than attempt to compromise between his own impressions and the obviously different effect of the play on the public.

These, then, are types of plays which I spoke of as difficult for criticism not to misrepresent, and the difficulty is fairly traceable to the special temperament and equipment of the critic. But there is at least one kind of play which it is not merely difficult, but impossible, for criticism not to misrepresent, and that kind is farce. For you do not represent the fun of a farce by merely saying it is funny or that the audience were in convulsions of laughter. You try (if you are a novice) to describe what made them laugh, and you find that on paper it is not ridiculous, but merely silly. You cannot translate the fun of farce from three dimensions into two. If the dialogue is witty, as in Mr. Maugham's *Home and Beauty*, you may give quotations from it. But you cannot represent in mere narrative the extraordinarily droll effect of the returned warrior confronted with the baby, or of the entry on the scene of the professional co-respondent. If the plot is ingeniously complicated, as in *Les Surprises du Divorce*, you may describe the complications so that your reader can see that they *would be* funny, but you cannot make them funny in print.

Farce, let me hasten to admit, is only the extreme instance of this difficulty for every critic. In a sense it exists for every acted play. If you could produce the effect of an acted play in description there would be no necessity for acting it. But in the general case description is only a subsidiary part of criticism, which is mainly concerned with analysis and æsthetic valuation. Now, you can analyse the character of Hamlet or Alceste, but not the fun of Falstaff in the buck-basket or of Géronte.

> . . . dans ce sac dont Scapin l'enveloppe.

The character still exists in print; the fun must be seen to be enjoyed. And at any rate for knockabout farce there is a certain tinge of critical distaste in the process of chronicling details so vulgar, so manifestly below "the dignity of history." It is all very well to laugh in the theatre—after dinner—at the spectacle of a gentleman sitting on his hat, but to have to write about it in cold blood tempts to a certain tone of condescension. In short, farce is notably a *genre* which it is impossible for criticism not to misrepresent.

On the other hand, there are, I fancy, dramatic kinds of which it is the almost inevitable tendency of criticism to exaggerate the interest and importance. For example, all kinds included in what one used to call the theatre of ideas. Ideas, you see, are a godsend to the critic; they are the very articles he deals in, and when he gets them in the

theatre he plays with them and picks them to pieces to see what is inside, like the child with a new toy. Give him a thesis, and you have given him his article! He can not only examine the playwright's solution, but suggest another one of his own, and in fact pass in review all the possible permutations and combinations of the problem presented.

The result is apt to be a little deceptive about the play itself, because it suits the critic to travel farther afield in the region of ideas than the playwright. Nor is it merely a question of intellectual area covered; the need for logical symmetry, for strict form, in analysis will often have tempted the critic to assume these qualities in the play when they are not, in fact, there. His picture of what the playwright has constructed will be, in Joe Gargery's phrase, a little too "architectooralooral." Hence the playgoer is often disappointed when he goes to see the play for himself. Half the ideas he has read about are not there, and those that are there are not so shipshape. I doubt, for instance, if there is so much in *Hamlet*, the actual play, seen within the four walls of the theatre, as the vast "*Hamlet* literature" which has grown out of it would have us believe. I can imagine Shakespeare with a twinkle in his eye asking us, "Do you really see all that in it?" I can think of only two dramatists who have always been able to have as many ideas about their plays as the critics—and a few over. They are Dumas *fils* and Mr. Shaw, both of whom

have written prefaces of vaster reach than the plays they precede. When you get "inside," what you actually see, though quite worth seeing, hardly comes up to the poster.

Well, these are some more or less open secrets of criticism of which it seems only decent to remind the public in order that they may be on their guard. I speak for myself, of course, and am in no way entitled to speak for my *confrères*. If any faults or vices have been disclosed, impute them, please, to my own idiosyncrasy.

APPLAUSE

When Sir Roger de Coverley went to the theatre to see *The Distrest Mother*, Addison tells us that, "upon Hermione's going off with a menace to Pyrrhus, the audience gave a loud clap." But that was at the end of an act, when a loud clap does not interfere with the action, and disturbs no one. One may be sure that even in those days, when "houses" were small and correspondingly select, few audiences subjected themselves to this wise restraint. It was an age, notably, of violent disapprobation, hooting, whistling, cat-calls. Disapprobation in the play-house of to-day is, normally, less noisy; on the other hand, applause has become more boisterous and inopportune than ever. Hand-clapping, in season and out of season, has become one of the nuisances of the theatre. If you think of it, striking one palm against the other with a resounding smack is a queer way of expressing your delight. It suggests the monkey tricks of primeval man. It is, like Tarzan, "of the apes." It is one of our failures in civilization. It is all very well at a public meeting, because it is there an expression of opinion, a sign of agreement with the speaker. If the audience were

silent, it would argue dissent, or at least indifference. But in the realm of dramatic art where we are supposed to be under the spell of illusion, inhabitants for the time being of an imaginary world, applause is an interruption, a rude reminder of reality, a really impolite distinction between the player and his part. I suppose, human nature being what it is, it is hopeless to protest, to ask audiences to keep their applause for the end of the act. People who go to the play for the play, who wish to lose themselves in the dream the playwright has woven for them, must continue to suffer (very literally) at the hands of other people who cannot dream out their dream, who wake up at brief intervals to give vent to their delight in " a loud clap." But on behalf of the quiet ones, the playgoers who wish to enjoy their theatrical illusion in comfort, I protest that it isn't fair. At any rate, the noisy ones might restrain themselves until the act-drop falls. The effect of their hand-clapping would then be multiplied tenfold. Their enthusiasm would burst forth with all the greater violence for having been pent up. But, as things are, there is an explosion of applause at every exit, at every tirade, nay, at every entrance, before the player has opened his mouth. Why not applaud before the act-drop goes up ? This actually happened at the Princes Theatre before the third act of *Daniel.* The public were so excited at the thought of seeing Mme. Bernhardt within the next few seconds that they applauded her by anticipation. If only they

would adopt the same plan over their other favourites ! The act itself might then be allowed to proceed in peace. It is the continual interruption of the story and the illusion of it by little bursts of sporadic applause, that is the nuisance.

I know that a great obstacle to ridding the playhouse of this tiresome habit is the players themselves. They say they cannot get on without instant applause. I cannot persuade myself that the true artist feels his art in that way ; he must, surely, be aware of the effect he is producing on his audience, must know whether he is in touch with it, without needing the assurance of " a loud clap." I should have thought that the true artist would be disconcerted by what is a sign that his imaginative hold on the spectator has momentarily broken down. Far worse, however, than the actor are his indiscreet " friends." Their applause is not only inopportune, but apt to be excessive. I had reason some time ago to notice the immoderate applause lavished upon one of the cleverest and most attractive of our younger actresses. It was continuous, deafening, out of all proportion, ridiculous. But so firmly has " a loud clap " now established itself among our theatrical habits that one or two of my readers actually professed to think I must be " prejudiced " against this young actress because I protested against excessive applause as likely to do her harm. I trust I can afford to regard any such wild notion with amusement—in which, I conjecture, the young

actress herself would join. But it shows to what extremities the custom of indiscriminate applause has attained, how we have grown to take it as a matter of course and to assume that we are lacking in proper appreciation of our favourites if we fail to mark everything they say and do with hurricanes of cheers.

Another nuisance, though a minor one—for we can always avoid it by leaving the theatre promptly—is the cry of "Speech! speech!" at the curtain fall. Why, in the name of commonsense, should we require an actor to make us a speech, another speech in his own person, after he has done speaking his part? Actors, so far as my experience goes, are very seldom good impromptu speakers. They know this themselves, and the wiser ones decline the invitation—as Mme. Bernhardt did, by the way, at the Princes. The others generally get out of it by a prepared impromptu, a dreadfully artificial effort, as a rule, with some allusion to the title of the new play dragged in. But, at present, one speech is not considered enough. We had no fewer than four at one theatre recently—from manager, producer, leading lady, and low comedian.

I respectfully suggest that the theatrical public might be content to take its theatrical pleasures with less noisy exuberance. The A.D.A. might add to its other valuable services by opening a class of deportment for audiences, with specially reduced terms for the front row of the pit. Or we might

have prefects, distinguished by a rosette, to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm of applause, as they do at the Westminster Play. But these are vain yearnings, I fear, rather than practical suggestions.

STAGE ILLUSION

THERE has been some correspondence in *The Times*, started by Lady Bell, protesting against the players' practice of coming forward at the end of each act to acknowledge the applause of the audience. It is urged that the dramatic illusion is thereby marred or destroyed. The players, if they must bow their acknowledgments, ought to wait until the end of the play. Surely this is to demand either too much or too little? If the illusion of the scene is to be preserved intact the actors ought not to be allowed to show themselves out of character at any moment, final as well as intermediate. And every other breach of illusion ought to be abolished. There should be no bustle or chatter or orchestral music in the inter-acts, which should be passed in complete darkness and in silent meditation. There should be neither applause nor booing, for these are signs that the audience have temporarily lost their sense of illusion and are distinguishing between the actor and his personage. These conditions, I may remark, are already satisfied at the motion-pictures. Perhaps that is a hitherto unsuspected reason for their popularity: the inviolate purity of their illusion.

But the spoken drama retains the advantage of human nature, live flesh and blood. Lady Bell and her fellow-protestants must enjoy these elements with the rest of us, and, enjoying them, they must put up with them too—put up with the human impulse to applaud on one side of the curtain and to respond with immediate smiles on the other side. This sense of human companionship in the theatre, of reciprocal attraction between the public and the players, seems to me of its very essence. Lady Bell and her sympathizers would sever the connexion. If the stupid public *will* break the illusion by applauding, then the players must "larn it to be a toad" by loftily ignoring the applause. Fancy asking players of all people—so sensitive, so dependent for their histrionic success on applause, so grateful for it when it comes—for this feat of philosophic detachment! That the players court and foster the applause, not without a certain artfulness, we all know. We know the curious influence of the turned-down lights on the applauding multitude; how the salvos tend automatically to repeat themselves until the lights go up. We know the little ways of the actors in taking the applause; the beckoning to an absentee at the wings, the affected embarrassment of the leading actor at finding himself inexplicably left alone on the stage. We know, in short, what is common knowledge, that in their own persons they must still be acting. But that is only an additional, and not unpleasing, touch

of human nature. And in the long run, even supposing that there is a breach in the continuity of the illusion, the applause does much more good than harm—nay, it is indispensable; without it there would be an end of acted drama. Actors simply cannot play to an unresponsive house. Yet, when the house does respond, Lady Bell would condemn the actors to be unresponsive. What would she say in an Italian theatre, where an actor applauded for a speech pauses to bow his thanks in the middle of the action? I remember that when Duse was playing *Francesca da Rimini* in London the Paolo of the occasion frequently interrupted the action in this way. On the other hand, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries our audiences were in the habit of crying "Off! off!" to an actor who displeased them. They valued good art more than continuity of illusion.

And, really, isn't this argument from illusion rather a mare's nest? Are our minds so inelastic that the delight of the balcony scene and the anticipation of the rest of *Romeo and Juliet* are spoiled for us because Mr. Brown in Romeo's clothes and Miss Jones in Juliet's appear before us in the interval to respond to our applause? We are not children. Illusion for us is not delusion. We are there to see Romeo and his lady-love, and to fall under the spell of their poetry and romance, but we are also there to appreciate the skill of Mr. Brown and Miss Jones in acting their parts. While the performance is

afoot, we distinguish subconsciously between the player and the personage. May we not in the intervals of the performance distinguish consciously ?

A suggestion has been made that is really an attempt at compromise between the two mental states. It is that when the act-drop has been raised in response to applause the action of the scene should be continued in some plausible way, but in dumb show. Some Victorian dramatists—Tom Robertson, for instance—actually provided stage-directions for these " encore " scenes. The expedient, I confess, strikes me as puerile. If we were merely applauding the play it might do. But at the act-drop we are applauding the players. And, for my part, their frankly coming forward to acknowledge our applause as the players that we all know them to be does not in the least hinder my resumption of illusion over the play when the curtain goes up again.

I say " for my part," because, after all, the degree of illusion in the theatre is largely a subjective matter. *Quot homines, tot* theatrical illusions. The two extremes, absolute illusion and absolute non-illusion, I have before now illustrated by the cases of Sir Roger de Coverley at *The Distrest Mother* and Tolstoy at *Siegfried.* To Sir Roger the widow in the play was as real as the widow who plagued him in actual life. To Tolstoy Siegfried was a person whose abdominal development betrayed the actor and who used a hammer as no one really uses a hammer.

Probably either extreme is rare in a London playhouse. But there are always two parties there—the people who come to be illuded by the play and the people who come to "follow" their favourite players. The followers communicate their satisfaction to the followed by clapping the palms of their hands together, and at the noise these others express *their* satisfaction by bowing and smiling. It may seem absurd, but it is very human. The exasperated illusionists write to *The Times*. But they will, I fear, have written in vain.

HURTICLES

So Thackeray used to call them, according to the Laird of Littlegrange. It was a name of familiar intimacy, with a smile at solemnity in it, like Johnson's Sherry Derry. If you sat down to write an article, you might be a confounded prig, but not if you could call it a hurticle. Somehow, the epithet "leading" spoils the charm of the homely word. Hurticles would shrink from the idea of leading. Their greatest luck, rare enough, is to beguile. But the best hurticle can never charm like a good letter. A Thackeray Roundabout is, I suppose, among the best, but I would swop a dozen of them for this or that letter of the said Littlegrange—say, the one about Stebbing's forehead or that about the day in London ending with a visit to Astley's and the walk back over the bridge, like one of Plato's lighter dialogues. Why does the good letter so easily beat the best essay? Because, I take it, it has no need of a "subject"; it isn't "on" anything; it expresses the writer at his ease, not with his head held stiff (as your head used to be clamped in iron at the photographer's) by his theme.

If we are inclined to pontificate, to take literature

and the arts too seriously, to have too fastidious a contempt for M. Homais and to bother over-much about MM. Bouvard and Pécuchet, to be solemn about Georgian poets and minutely curious over the minor Carolines, why, let us remember that it is only a hurticle that we are writing and we shall at once become more human. Especially, I think if we are writing in the country, where Flaubert (though he himself wrote there) seems incongruous and won't " rhyme " with young ducklings trying to squeeze through a hole in the netting and a brown sail so slowly coming down the river that you have to write another paragraph before you can be sure it is moving at all.

Certainly, the best letters are written in the country. One only has to name Cowper and Fitz-Gerald to establish that. Mme. de Sévigné wrote best at Livry and Les Rochers; Voltaire at Cirey and Ferney; Arnold at Pains Hill; Meredith at Box Hill. Lamb, well, Lamb is a case of six of one and half-a-dozen of the other; so we'll rule him out. You can't quote Gray against me, for a University City is a place of gardens and groves (great eighteenth century word, groves! It lasted down to Maple Grove—where are our " Groves " now?), a *rus in urbe* if ever there was one. Besides, many of Gray's very best were written from the Lakes. Oh yes, and we must rule out Byron, too—for he rather knocks the bottom out of my generalization. After all, more depends on the letter-writer than the place

of writing ; so much may be conceded to matter-of-fact objectors.

And so it is, I fear, with hurticles. Nevertheless, I should like to maintain—and will, if challenged—that Hazlitt's best came from Winterslow ; including, of course, the very best, the one about the partridge cooking for his supper and his resolve to " do it now " instead of thinking over it for a whole week. Winterslow is on Salisbury Plain (isn't it ?) and Mr. Maurice Hewlett, he tells us himself, writes in the middle of that Plain to-day. Could he write with such charm in London ? I doubt it. And remember that we don't see the Plain—an illimitable expanse, I suppose—while we read Mr. Hewlett ; thus we get the relative proportions pleasingly altered (without, of course, any complicity of Mr. Hewlett's) in our minds. It is like the celebrated portrait of M. Perrichon on Mont Blanc—a very small Mont Blanc and a very large Perrichon. I mean no disrespect to Salisbury Plain ; but I am glad to have its inconveniently vast area somewhat diminished in my mind's eye while I am reading Mr. Hewlett.

The relation of place to performance, by the way, not seldom goes by rule of contrary. The best country-featured " nature " papers are sometimes written in a dingy Inn of Court, and the most brilliant pictures of stifling, crowded London social gatherings in the deepest recesses of the country. A little yellow-bound volume to which I have already

alluded, breathing England in every word and exhibiting English landscape scenery and country-house life on every page, was, I learn to my astonishment, actually written under the burning sun of Italy. You never know.

And this brings me back to hurticles. It is time, perhaps, to confess that my ducklings and my brown sail were sheer bluff. I happen *not* to be writing this hurticle in the country. Yet no; they were not all bluff; for the mind naturally reverts to what it loves best, and more than ever at moments when it must needs do without it. We are like Susan at the corner of Wood Street, who saw

> Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
> And a river flow on through the vale of Cheapside.

And this feeling for the country of the sojourner in town is a most precious balm in a newspaper office. I hold strongly that hurticles (as distinguished from articles, the august "leaders") should never be written in newspaper offices. Fancy cannot roam freely there. You can idealize your newspaper office (see the films *passim*) at will, when you are away from it. It is best left so. Actually on the spot self-deception is impossible. Everybody is very kind. Polite messengers come in and ask, "Do you know what you are writing, Sir?" without the slightest intention of irony and solely with an eye to space. Nevertheless, the environment (blest Victorian word!) is discouraging. The fact is, they know all about "writing" there, it has no secrets

for them, the mystery has gone out of it. All the materials for writing are at hand, " copy " paper, ink, pens (not your favourite nib) and printers' " readers," always ready, indeed eager, to put your spelling right. But somehow, where " writing " is so much a matter of course, you feel that it is not good enough. Literature has become a vain thing, a mere item in a huge organization, jostling in the crowd of " news," " correspondence," and " advts." No, hurticles should be reserved for the seclusion of the study, the sacred spot which the scared housemaid passes on tiptoe because master is understood to be " writing." And if he should be only smoking his pipe, or idling with a detective story, nobody knows.

BLACKBIRDS

It is odd, and indeed disgraceful, to have lived in this world for—well, let me say ever so many lustres—and only now to appreciate the full, rich quality of the blackbird's note. There is one of these birds singing away "like mad" in the orchard as I write. He is perched almost at the very apex of a tall Chaumontel pear tree, and stands out like a weather-cock against the sky. He has taken up the same post every day for a week. It seems childish to record so simple a fact, but the truth is I am quite proud to have noticed it. Like the rest of the world, I have read reams of poetry in my time about the songs and the ways of birds, but have taken it all as "common form" and generally yawned. Yet here is this persistent fellow stirring a new life, a new curiosity in me, and prompting me to envy the placid tribe of ornithologists.

Yes, I know what Pope says. But man is not the sole proper study of mankind. Happy are they who make a study of blackbirds! It is something to get away for a moment from human psychology and sociology and the other human investigations that have labelled themselves with such ugly names. Most of us seem to be obsessed with one another's

peculiarities. Why not try blackbirds for a change? It would make us, I am sure, more modest, more benignant, as well as wiser. But we prefer to be conceited and to go on writing innumerable novels, poems, and plays about our precious selves and our "dirty little souls." *Homo sum* is our blatant cry, and it is our boast that we think nothing human to be alien—thereby implying that we are not going to bother about blackbirds. Yet a greater dramatist than Terence hampered himself by no such pitiful restriction. Indeed, Shakespeare, as we all know, loved birds passionately and knew many of their secrets. Shakespeare, if only by alliteration, suggests Shaw, and I have sometimes wished that G. B. S., that exclusive analyst of men and supermen, had tried nature-study as a parergon. It needn't have been blackbirds; it might have been beetles, or what you will, so long as it was a change from the two-legged animal without feathers that has been his perpetual hallucination. If only he had been the least little bit of a lepidopterist! I am sure that the knowledge of butterflies and the gentle hobby of pursuing them (in vain, I stipulate, for I hate the idea of running a pin through them) would have given a mellower tone to his plays, imparted to them that felicity of mansuetude that, amid so many brilliant qualities, they just miss.

But butterflies are for the select few. Blackbirds must serve the general turn. About these, you see, I can speak with more confidence, now that I have

got on fairly familiar terms with my friend in the tree top. Fairly, I say, for though I wish him "good morning" every day, I have to admit that he takes no notice. What if he should consider the study of homuncules to be what we foolishly consider the study of his race, a negligible hobby? O irony! Anyhow, there is a numerous body of Londoners that I would earnestly conjure to try blackbirds. I refer to what is called the theatrical world.

To withdraw from that world for a time and to ponder over it calmly amid rural surroundings (with or without blackbirds) is a salutary disciple for the critic of plays. It is true that when he is in that world he is not of it; he is reacting against it. But its atmosphere affects him, and to see the thing as it really is he must get outside it. Only then will he become fully aware of the many absurdities that characterize it. One of these is to take itself too seriously. Economically, I know, its present condition is serious enough. Theatre rents are exorbitant, audiences are dwindling, many actors and stage hands are unemployed. But it is no business of mine to discuss the commerce of the theatre. What strikes me as absurd, and more particularly while the blackbird is in full note (as he still is, though he has shifted his perch to a lower tree), is the pompous solemnity with which the modern theatre is discussed by many worthy people on its artistic side. They talk of the modern theatre as

though it had the same place and the same importance as the old theatre, the theatre of Elizabeth or of the Restoration, before the human mind had taken to expressing itself through the novel and the newspaper.

The modern theatre! What is it but a place of entertainment, and of entertainment, for the most part, of the half-educated? The huge, muddle-headed, in the strict sense of the term illiterate, crowd that modern life has produced gets the theatre that it deserves. Even the minority of the crowd with intellectual leanings have only leanings, not accomplishment. Ibsen was too strong meat for them. When they get a so-called "high-brow" play, as for instance something from Mr. Shaw, they generally take hold of it by the wrong end, are careless about it as a work of art, and extract from it a view of life that passes for "Shavianism." Shavianism may be a truly philosophic view, but it gives a somewhat lop-sided view of the universe to those who are unable to correct it by any other system of philosophy. Mr. Shaw has infected some of our younger writers, with the queerest effect—they have his jauntiness without his brains. I read the other day in a novel of a lady's maid who attended ethical lectures and was a confirmed Shavian. This read like mischief, but I fancy there is a grain of truth in it. Many humble playgoers, I believe, owe their introduction to the intellectual life to Mr. Shaw, and identify him with it. That is a feather in his cap,

but the fact remains that the " intellectuals " in the theatre are by no means on a par with the intellectuals outside it. The majority of playgoers, however, make no pretensions to intellect; they don't want it, and they don't get it. They get a vapid, semi-romantic picture of the life they themselves live, or would like to live. There is scarcely a breath of poetry, of spirituality, in the modern theatre. There is no dignity, ethical or artistic. What does abound in it is mediocrity—mediocrity of mind, of ideal, of taste. Why, then, be so solemn about it?

If we are to be solemn, let us be solemn about the novel, which to-day is much more important artistically than the theatre. For in the novel we can avoid the " best sellers " (which we can't in the theatre) and discover here and there, by careful looking, real literature. Better still, let us leave off being solemn for a while about our dear human selves, and turn for a change to the blackbird. He has just flown back to his old perch, still singing away.

THE EXEMPLARY THEATRE

Newman has left on record the annoyance of himself and his associates at being called young people trying to reform the world. Mr. Granville Barker is old enough not to mind being called young, and, for "reformer," he is like the livin' skellinton, proud o' the title. He commenced reformer some score of years ago with his (and Mr. William Archer's) "Scheme and Estimates for a National Theatre." We are still awaiting that theatre with the patience that Johnson professed when assured that the booby in his company would by and by grow amusing—"Sir, I can wait." But Mr. Barker is not discouraged. He has devised a new scheme, which he sets forth in "The Exemplary Theatre." This theatre is not to be confused with the old-fashioned playhouse, though plays are to be performed in it; it is to be primarily a school, an institution for the study and development of dramatic art. Of the theatre as school Mr. Barker sets forth a plan which, to avoid the reproach of vague Utopianism, is worked out in every practical detail. The classes, called by the barbarous name of "seminars"; the numbers composing them; the successive stages of study; the teaching staff; the

curriculum—everything is minutely mapped out. There are to be special pupils, in training for play-writing or play-acting, and general pupils, who are merely taking as much of drama and histrionics as will be useful to them in other professions. The whole course is to be taken very seriously; it must be the very opposite of the proceedings at Mansfield Park when Mr. Yates and the Bertrams "got up" *Lovers' Vows* till interrupted by the terrible Sir Thomas. The pupils are to combine by twos and threes in writing plays or scraps of plays for other groups to criticize or complete. This is called the co-operative study of plays, and apparently it has already been introduced in America by Professor Baker of Harvard. You may suppose, for example, play-acting to be taken out of the hands of the O.U.D.S. and made a subject in the Schools, with a Regius Professor and inter-collegiate lectures. There would be workshops attached, where pupils could paint their own scenery or, at any rate, have a jolly "rag" with paint pots. Would any sensible man like to see Oxford thus Americanized? I believe that some American universities hold classes for short story writing, others for film stories. Was there not a school in "The Wreckers" where young Americans were taught to gamble in imaginary stocks and shares? Mr. Barker must forgive me if I admit that his Scholastic Theatre seems to me only a degree less fantastic.

It will have been seen that his hobby is co-opera-

tion. He casts, in passing, an approving glance at community theatres, village players, drama leagues, and other collective forms of more or less artistic effort. But a crowd never invented an idea or originated a work of art. You see that it must be so, once you have grasped the idea that the expression of intuitions, which is what constitutes the æsthetic fact, is a spiritual, wholly internal thing. *Communicate* your expression to others and you may require collective effort, as, for instance, when the play you have imagined in your study is acted on the stage. Actors are then necessary. They do co-operate in the act of *communication*, but not in the primary process of art, the process of intuition-expression. Mr. Barker, it seems to me, has an overweening sense of the actor's importance. "The art of acting," he says, "was the beginning of drama. Before ever the literary man and his manuscript appeared acting was there, and it remains the foundation of the whole affair." If he means that actors existed before there was anything to act, he is talking nonsense. What he really means is that the human imagination and its expression by language (whether words or gestures) preceded the invention of writing. The play, and not the players, still remains the foundation of the whole affair.

But, to exalt the actors, Mr. Barker persists in regarding a play, before they take it up, as merely so much manuscript. Playwrights are "people who place things on paper—and really a written

play is no more than our plan, our theory, of what we hope the completed thing will be." Really, it ought not to be necessary to point out that the written play is only a partial record, for convenience, of the whole work imagined by the author, seen in his mind's eye, heard in his mind's ear, solidly realized and alive within him. As a work of art it is already a " completed thing." If the actor and the playhouse are needed to " complete " it for communication to the public, the painted scenery and the living men and women are merely there to translate into material fact what has already been realized in the dramatist's imagination. Does Mr. Barker suppose that when Beethoven made a symphony all his share was the writing down of notes in staves, the rest being left to the players, from the first violin to the big drum ? No ; he knows that Beethoven first heard the symphony in his imagination, already complete, before any first violin and big drum communicated it to the audience.

I am far from denying that acting is an art, as my readers must well know. The instrument that the actor plays on is himself, his personality, his imagination—a far more delicate and variable thing than a fiddle or an oboe. His business is to bring that personality through that imagination into approximate (it can never be more than approximate) coincidence with the dramatist's imagined personage. In that sense, and only in that sense, is there " co-operation " with the playwright and " completion "

of the play. It is true that *revues* are generally produced in this combined fashion, the "stars" taking just as much or as little of the author's words as suits them, interpolating their own "gags" and business *ad lib.* But that is precisely the reason why most *revues* are not works of dramatic art.

Naturally, magnifying the actor's apostleship as he does, Mr. Barker thinks the current criticism of acting ill-informed and inadequate. He suspects the average critic knows nothing of acting as an art, and suggests that the chief attention is paid to the play itself, because it is "easier." It might be retorted, I think, that, if he believes this, he knows nothing of criticism as an art. The play deals with life, actual or fantastic; it presents therefore as a rule an infinitely richer matter for criticism than the success or failure of the actor to realize the author's personage. When a great player—a Coquelin, a Duse, or a Sarah—makes histrionic criticism worth while, it is forthcoming. I can only hope that dramatic criticism will be omitted from the curriculum of the Exemplary Theatre.

THE SURPRISE THEATRE

The Marinetti obliges the world with another manifesto. You expect to find it bombastic, megalomaniac, and generally absurd; and you are not disappointed. That is the misfortune of Futurism; it has a past. Its mission is to exhort us to sever ourselves from the past, but it can never get away from its own. Indeed, the Marinetti is inclined to vaunt the past of Futurism. "We have glorified and renewed the music-hall" is his proud boast. "Our Synthetic Theatre has destroyed the old theatrical technique, made up of vraisemblance at all costs, of continuous logic, and of graduated preparation." Presumably these exploits have been confined to Italian soil. Certainly London is neither dotted with renovated music-halls nor strewn with the ruins of theatrical technique. Anyhow, "to-day we bound forward afresh."

We bound forward with a new institution, the Surprise Theatre. This is designed "to aerate the public mind by amusing it and surprising it by all the means, facts, contrasts, gestures, ideas, that have not yet been brought on the stage and are capable of gaily shaking up human sensibility."

Such a promise is naturally a whet to our curiosity. Any one who proffers a surprise is a public benefactor. In the South Sea Bubble a tempting investment was opened to subscribers, " who were not to know what it was." Detective stories and plays flourish on the same principle. To excite curiosity with a big " ? " and then to convert it into surprise with a big " ! " is the business of most street posters. A life without surprise is only a living death. That is one of the drawbacks of age, of the higher education, and of an apathetic temperament; you are surprised at nothing. And it is also one of the drawbacks of the Marinetti and his Futurism; you are ceasing to find either of them surprising.

And yet—immediately to eat one's words—the Marinetti does surprise us this time. He surprises us by enouncing a perfectly true and rational æsthetic principle. " We have often declared," he says, " that surprise is an essential element of art; that the work of art, far from being subject to what is called reality, shall be autonomous, be like nothing but itself, and consequently appear a prodigy." This is an incontrovertible proposition. Surprise is an element of art, because every work of art is unique, is not identifiable with any other work, presents a new form of beauty, is, as we say, a " creation " and therefore causes surprise. The Marinetti instances Botticelli's " Primavera," which on its appearance had the value of its surprising originality. But our familiarity with it, he adds,

has destroyed its surprise value. Not so; the surprise of perfect beauty is perpetually securable. Mr. Gall, in an oft-quoted passage in "Headlong Hall," pleaded, in the laying out of grounds, for "a distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness*. Pray, Sir, said Mr. Milestone, by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?" Had the grounds been a work of art, Mr. Gall would have had an easy answer. And the Marinetti goes astray again when he says that "after centuries full of works of genius, which have all surprised the world, it is very difficult to surprise to-day." No more difficult to-day than at any previous time. Art is not science, building up on the accumulations of the past; it is born afresh every day. Subjects are inexhaustible in number; so are treatments of the same subject. And with every fresh treatment will come a new surprise.

But the Marinetti's worst mistake is to come. He converts the proposition "Art is surprising" into "Surprise is art." Many things cause surprise that have nothing to do with perfect beauty. For instance, if the Marinetti were to stand (in fact, not, as usual, in figure) on his head. It seems that at Lucca, after one of the Marinetti's surprise plays, a spectator did actually walk round the edge of the gallery on his hands, upside-down, to the public surprise. The Marinetti seems to count this a valuable illustration of what his new Surprise

Theatre has to offer. For, put categorically, the functions of the Surprise Theatre are :—

(1) To strike the sensibility of the public with an amusing stupor. [Is stupor amusing ?]

(2) To suggest a continuity of amusing ideas, just as water struck violently is dashed in the air, produces concentric circles, wakes the echoes, which in turn wake others.

(3) To provoke among the public words and gestures absolutely unforeseen, so that each surprise on the stage begets other surprises in the pit and boxes, outside the theatre, in the town, on the morrow and following days.

It is added that "by training the mind to the greatest elasticity by all these intellectual, extra-logical gymnastics, it is the object of the Surprise Theatre to rescue the youth of Italy from the sombre and brutalizing obsession of politics." Well, the intellectual, extra-logical gymnastics of the playgoer at Lucca who walked round the gallery edge on his hands may have trained the mind of the audience to the greatest elasticity, but it ought, in fairness, to be said that the spectacle of people standing on their heads can occasionally be enjoyed in politics.

Specimens of surprise plays are appended, and I can only say that they strike my sensibility with a stupor that is not amusing. Here is one, entitled *Musique de Toilette.* The pedals of an upright piano are stuck into elegant little gilt lady's shoes. An actor (first lady's maid) plays a tune on the key-board with a feather brush. Another actor (second lady's maid) rubs the keys with a toothbrush. A

page kneels and rubs the gilt shoes. (*Curtain.*) At this some one in the pit cried to the Marinetti: "No, you're not mad! You madden us!" A gallery boy first hissed, and then violently applauded, whereupon the pittite shouted, "There's the first mad case!" and rushed in terror to the door. For my part, rather than a Surprise Theatre that offers such surprises give me the sombre and brutalizing obsession of politics.

AN ANTI-ROMANTIC

THERE is a hackneyed quotation from Johnson about the fellow who claps a hump on his back. It has lost its sting. We have come to see that acting is not mere imitation, mere pretending to be somebody else. It is being yourself, expressing your own temperament under cover of somebody else. This is true even of our most "versatile" actors. Mr. Nelson Keys, that miracle of versatility, will play a dozen parts in an evening all superficially different. His German waiter will be authentically Teutonic, his French lover outrageously Gallic, his Japanese juggler *on ne peut plus* Japanese. But they will all be variants of one temperament; the same impishness, the same nervous tension, will mark them all.

On the other hand we have our so-called "natural" actors, who are spoken of in disparagement by the uncritical as "always playing themselves." In the art of acting, as in any other art, the first requisite is life. The most lively acting is to be had from the actors who play themselves. Mrs. Siddons was a great Lady Macbeth because she played herself. Lamb complained that her grand manner of dismissing the guests at the banquet was a nuisance; there was nothing about that in the text. But she

made grand gestures because that was her way, and it was a way that gave Lady Macbeth a more vivid, intimate life. To say that an actor plays himself is, of course, not to say that he plays his empirical self, that he merely continues his everyday life on the stage. It is only to say that, while projecting himself imaginatively into his part, he presents it with his own temperament.

Imaginative insight has its limits, and with most actors these are very quickly reached. "Great" acting means greatness of imaginative power served by a rich temperament. It is a rare combination. We have no "great" actor on the English stage at this moment. But we have the next best thing, one or two "natural" actors—actors who can give free play to an interesting, impressive, or amusing temperament. Sir Gerald du Maurier is a notable example, but of him I have already discoursed. Another, and one that has held the stage much longer, and still holds it, to the delight of the judicious, is Sir Charles Hawtrey.

Actors are sometimes heard to sigh for a change of stage *emploi*, for a part outside their usual line. They even make fantastic experiments in the inappropriate. Edmund Kean played Harlequin, and Mr. Seymour Hicks, I believe, has tried Richard Crookback. But it is not thinkable that Sir Charles has ever craved anything else than a "Hawtrey part." You simply cannot imagine him in Shakespeare or Sheridan, or, to use the theatrical lingo,

any " costume " play. If ever he wears " costume " the effect is at once comic ; you laugh because it is he who is wearing it. When he appeared as the great Duke of Marlborough at the fancy ball in *Lord and Lady Algy*, the house was in a roar of laughter from the moment the curtain went up. The mere sight of the actor in such a garb—the actor so essentially himself under any disguise—was an immense joke. That the Duke was tipsy (in a gentlemanly way) and troubled by his jack-boots was an entirely different ecstasy ; many another comedian might have made *that* funny. The great absurdity was the incongruity between that particular comedian, with all our familiar associations clinging to him, and that particular figure of the historico-romantic past.

So it was in Mr. Hackett's play, *Ambrose Applejohn*, at the Criterion. When the curtain of Act II. went up on Sir Charles as a pirate chief, pig-tailed, booted, sashed, and hung with pistols, the house shook with laughter. For a pirate chief is quintessentially a romantic figure, and the actor's temperament, the temperament which informs and colours every " Hawtrey part," is distinctly anti-romantic. The fact is, he is typically " modern " and typically modern English. He represents for us a familiar side of our social life—the public school, mundane, sportsman side—with its smooth manners, its well-cut clothes, its fondness for " chaff," its imperturbable good " form " and good-humour. He was all this, even

in the old days when he played nothing but lying husbands in French farces. He always lied, if I may put it paradoxically, like an English gentleman. He suggests always that "inbred good-humour" that Burke said was characteristically English. His little added touches of selfishness, love of ease, social prejudice—or whatever weakness the part requires—are always English touches. And virtually every part he plays implies that "sportsmanlike" attitude to life which we flatter ourselves is peculiarly English, too.

This English type is the very antithesis of romance. And that is why, at the Criterion, the idea of this comfortable, glass-of-port-after-dinner, dress-jacket Englishman expressing a yearning for romantic adventure is in itself comic. Romance comes to him in the shape of a sham foreign adventuress, who asks him to defend her against her foes. He is dragged backwards and forwards by the excited woman, and his face expresses the polite bewilderment of a quiet, ease-loving, well-bred English gentleman at finding himself in such a quandary. It is anti-romance smiling helplessly in the grip of romance. And mark that, when he becomes in a dream the pirate chief, the very phrases he utters—quotations all from the buccaneering classics—are delivered with a grotesque air of disbelief. It is anti-romance repudiating, in the very act of speaking, the language of romance.

In fine, Mr. Hackett has had the art to furnish the

actor with a characteristic " Hawtrey part," and the actor has the wisdom to " abound," as the French say, " in his own sense." He has had that wisdom throughout his stage career, and thereby been a munificent contributor to " the public stock of harmless pleasure."

GENIUS AND DISORDER

Messrs. Duckworth have published the sixth and last volume of "The History of Theatrical Art," by Karl Mantzius, translated from the Danish by Mr. C. Archer. The volume deals with the Romantic period, and I took it up with a certain repugnance, feeling that I didn't want to read any more frowsy anecdotes about Kean and his contemporaries, but I soon found out my mistake.

Mantzius was a man of letters as well as an actor, and his book is not only agreeable to read, but of the highest critical and historical value. Actors, like other artists, live by intuition, not analysis, so that they seldom explain their art. Mantzius was the exception. He reveals acting from within. Thus you understand Kean better through his eyes than through Hazlitt's, and Lemaître than through Gautier's. He believes in the independent creative activity of theatrical art, as distinct from the art of dramatic poetry, and his book gives good warrant for his creed. There is an illuminating passage on Ludwig Devrient's method of work, quoted from his nephew Eduard. "His study of a part consisted of incessant intercourse with the imaginary human figure which he had discovered and chosen for that

part. He associated with this figure with the greatest pleasure to himself and with real tenderness. He did not mould the image of his fantasy ; he did not deck it out with traits of detail—no, he observed its traits day by day, they came to him as discoveries, filling him with heartfelt joy, which he felt the strongest need to communicate to others. Thus, when the time came, he appeared before the public in the very image itself, with which, by living with it, he had identified himself. . . . He *saw* human beings as he represented them ; no thought of *making an effect* entered his mind." What is this if not artistic " creation " ?

Devrient, says Mantzius, was an actor of the " dæmonic " type. " Genius," " sublime," and " dæmonic " were the three pet words of the Romantic period. Of course " dæmonic " connotes a morbid, neurasthenic, " Byronic " element. The actor was not expected to be like other men ; there was supposed to be something unaccountable, irresponsible, in him. Thus A. W. Schlegel wrote :—

" The actor, with his equivocal way of life (which in the very nature of things it is impossible to alter), must be possessed by a certain reckless enthusiasm for his art if he is to achieve the extraordinary. As soon as the ordinary citizen's anxiety to secure a sufficient livelihood for himself and his wife and his children gets the upper hand in an actor, all progress in his art is at an end."

And I remember a passage in Gautier's collected theatrical criticisms (which I cannot quote as the volume is not at hand) lamenting the low level to

which Parisian acting had fallen in his time because the players had all become *embourgeoisés*. And this in the heyday of Frédéric Lemaître! Somehow disorder had come to be inseparably associated with genius in the minds of the Romantics. Each of the three great representative actors of the movement—Edmund Kean, Ludwig Devrient, and Frédéric Lemaître—led an irregular life and drank like a fish.

The very title of Dumas *père's* play of *Kean* is *Désordre et Génie*. Mantzius makes only passing mention of this extraordinary play; but I think it is worth a little more attention, not only as a typical "popular" play of the Romantic period, but as the glorification of the histrionic ideal of that period, the "dæmonic" actor. Kean (a wholly imaginary Kean, except as regards the alcoholism) is shown in every attitude, and always sublime. He chastises the licentious nobility of Britain and tells plain truths to the Prince of Wales. He keeps a pet lion, Ibrahim. He is simultaneously beloved by a great lady, a young *bourgeoise*, and a woman of the people. He dresses up as a sailor for the baptism of a mountebank's child, and gives this remarkable reason: "Godfather of a child belonging to poor but old friends of mine, I thought this costume would give them more liberty with me by making me the more their equal." He refuses to play one night because of his injured feelings, and nobly withdraws his refusal. Every action of his life is done "for the gallery." He is the perfect Romantic "mummer."

To-day this type only appeals to one's sense of humour, but Dumas admired it, and defended it. As Kean drinks heavily and doesn't pay his creditors, some miserable philistine suggests he would do better to lead an orderly life. "Be orderly!" cries Kean with indignation; "and my genius, what, pray, will become of that while I am being orderly?" An old friend remonstrates with him on his irregular living. "You are right, old friend," replies Kean. "I feel I am killing myself with this life of debauch and orgies! But what would you have? I can't change it! An actor has to know all the passions before he can express them." Note the confusion of the "passions" with the rum bottle. Needless to add, there are the usual reflections on the actor's martyrdom in having to play Falstaff when the heart is breaking, or Hamlet in a particularly jolly moment.

This farrago of absurdities did, strange to say, embody an ideal actually entertained by the Romanticists, the ideal of the "dæmonic" actor. The real Kean and Devrient and Lemaître might each of them have sincerely answered, like the hero of the play, "and what will become of my genius while I am being orderly?" The association of genius with disorder was a peculiar prejudice of the period, and actors thought it not only becoming but indispensable to be, in their private lives, queer, excitable, intemperate, disreputable citizens. Their managers seem as a rule to have put up with their irregular

ways. Lemaître, one night so intoxicated that the manager decided not to raise the curtain, insisted upon acting—and acted as well as ever. But there was one manager who had autocratic views. This was no other than the great Goethe. There had been trouble between a married pair in the Weimar Theatre Company, and Goethe addressed the Theatre Committee as follows :—

> As is only right, the Committee declines to interfere in any matters that appear not directly to concern the theatre ; but when a man gives his wife a pair of black eyes, this may concern the theatre very much if she is cast to play a young heroine's part the same evening. It should be laid down, therefore, very distinctly that any actor who beats his wife will at once be confined in the main guard by order of the Committee.

REAL CHINAMEN

A RECENT newspaper article on " The Bondage of Realism " compared the real Chinamen in *East of Suez* at His Majesty's Theatre to Mr. Crummles's real pumps. The comparison would imply that Mr. Maugham's play is " written round " the real Chinamen ; but, as a matter of fact, it is not. " A play about China must lack one most important element of realism in that the players, if we are to understand them, must talk English and not Chinese." Is not this, as a general principle, rather to overrate the element of speech in drama ? Do not many actors notoriously employ language as a means to conceal the author's thoughts, and do not many authors retaliate by giving the actors no thoughts to conceal ? Be that as it may, the art of drama appeals as much to the eye as to the ear ; otherwise, we might just go and read the play-book and have done with it. Gesture, facial expression, bodily action : these are all aids to understanding quite as valuable as speech. You laugh heartily at Géronte beaten by Scapin, though Géronte is mute. What is more, there are cases where it is indispensable to your understanding the action of the play that you don't understand what the actor is saying.

See the *cérémonie turque* in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme ;* the actors talk gibberish, and that is part of the fun.

A very similar case is that of the real Chinamen in *East of Suez.* They are there to give the audience the impression of a street in modern Pekin. You find yourself amid the hurly-burly of a Chinese street crowd. You don't understand a word they are saying, and so much the better for your illusion ; you are enjoying the scene for its strangeness, its incomprehensibility, its *chinoiserie.* The writer I am quoting seems to imply that the spectacle would be more " artistic " if the Chinamen were not real Chinamen but real Englishmen pretending to be Chinese. I suspect this to be the result of a common fallacy : the fallacy that, because plays ought not to be " written round " real pumps, water ought not to be poured on the stage out of real pumps, but out of canvas imitations of real pumps. There is a bondage of anti-realism as well as of realism.

Strange as it may appear, the author and the producer of *East of Suez* have thoroughly understood their own business. The author's purpose was " to produce the Chinese atmosphere " indispensable for his story, which turns upon Chinese racial facts, customs, and ethics, and the producer saw that for this purpose real Chinamen were necessary. But we English don't understand Chinese ? Quite so, but the author, far from forgetting that difficulty, has adroitly *used* it for the artistic benefit of his play.

He brings in his Chinese-gabbling crowd at the moments, and only at the moments, when their very incomprehensibility is a dramatic "value." First, in the street scene to enhance the queerness of the spectacle, to give the audience just the impression they would have if they were tourists wandering for amusement into a market in Pekin. Second, in the scene where the crowd bursts into Daisy's house after the attack on the Englishman. Again they are jabbering an unknown tongue; they are obviously excited—*that* you can understand, and a more complete comprehension would only spoil the effect aimed at. For what the author wants to produce in you, just then, is a state of anxious suspense. *What* calamity is it, you wonder, that has just happened, and that this sinister crowd have evidently had a hand in? Who has been murdered? The less you understand what is being said, the more your excitement is stimulated. So soon as the injured man is brought in, the crowd disappears. It has served its purpose. Real Chinamen have done for you, the spectator, what only real Chinamen could do, and now real English men and women can resume the intelligible drama for you.

There has, in short, been no "bondage" to realism, no concession to "the desire to import some other interest besides the purely artistic." I fully agree about the existence and recent growth of that desire; no theatrical critic can be blind to it. But the truth is, that generalizations, excellent

in themselves, are wholly inapplicable to this particular case. The real Chinamen in *East of Suez* are absolutely in their right place: an integral part of the play, an invaluable contribution to its artistic effect.

A FALSE ANALOGY

You never can tell! Newspaper articles have *sua fata*, and their fates hang upon something altogether independent of the writer's intention, namely, the mental preoccupation of the reader. If the one happens to "rhyme to" the other, that is a great bit of luck. But the writer is seldom made aware of it because consent is given by silence, and it is only dissent that, as a rule, prompts to expression. Judge, therefore, of my good fortune when, of three letters which my article on "Real Chinamen" has provoked, one expresses cordial agreement. The writer, an English resident in Paris, finds an apparently devious but really the most direct way to my heart by declaring that what he is good enough to consider the merits of my article seem to him only natural in one who shares his love of blackbirds. He proceeds to tell me of "an old bachelor blackbird who has spent three summers and two winters in my garden always in the same *carré*," and who this year "sang till the day the swifts left." I heartily thank my correspondent. Friendly little confidences like these sweeten existence.

But the letter bears out my point: that the fate of what one writes hangs upon the mental pre-

occupation of the reader. This one, a fellow bird-lover, was predisposed to agree with my opinions on Chinese actors. The two other letters I have mentioned equally illustrate the point, though in a strikingly different way. The first was from a gentleman who, it appeared, had published pamphlets on the question of imported foreign labour, and so was preoccupied with *that* subject—an important subject, doubtless, for politicians and political economists, but one which my article never pretended to touch. Irresistible, however, is the influence of mental preoccupation! This correspondent ignored all my arguments, which were solely directed to the artistic aspect of the question, and roundly abused me—and incidentally the whole directorate and staff of *The Times* (with whose names he seemed far more familiar than I am)—for an article tending to justify the employment of Chinese labour in this country! Well, I keep a waste-paper basket.

The third letter addresses itself to a really artistic point, and I must do my best to answer it. Its writer's preoccupation is with pictures—unless it is with cakes. He compares the dramatist's use of real Chinamen in his play to a painter's use of real currants in the picture of a cake, and asks if I would say of the currants what I said of the Chinamen, that they were "absolutely in the right place."

I used that phrase in replying to the contention

of another writer who, speaking of "realism" in art, had detected in it "the desire to import some other interest besides the purely artistic." My point was that the real Chinamen in the play did not offer an extra-artistic interest, but were an integral part of it, a contribution to its artistic effect. In the preliminary street scene (wherein there was no drama) their use had been to create the true Chinese atmosphere; their subsequent use at a critical moment of the drama itself was to produce, by the very unintelligibility of their speech, coupled with their excited demeanour, the impression that the dramatist wanted to produce in the spectator—a state of wonderment and anxious suspense. I said that the previous writer seemed to think the spectacle would be more "artistic" if the Chinamen were not real Chinamen, but real Englishmen pretending to be Chinese, and I presume that my correspondent, with his parable of the painted cake and the real currants, thinks so too.

Now the real Chinamen in the play are no more like the real currants in the picture than they are like Mr. Crummles's real pumps. The Chinamen can, and do, represent themselves. The currants in the picture cannot, for the simple reason that representation and reality are here not *in pari materia*. A picture is a conventional representation on a flat surface of things really solid; import the solids themselves into the picture and they at once cease (having a perspective and lighting of their own,

different from the picture's) to " look like " themselves.

The suggested analogy between the art of the picture and the art of drama, in short, breaks down because of the difference of *medium* in the two arts. The peculiarity of acted drama is its use of real material—namely, live men and women. The argument implied in the parable of the cake proves too much : that just as in a picture of a cake the painter cannot use real currants, so in a representation of human actions the dramatist cannot use live men and women. Indeed, I fancy that this peculiarity of acted drama is at the bottom of many people's (notably of Charles Lamb's) objection to it ; they feel that the real currants are sticking out from the canvas. Lamb spoke of " the discordancy, never to be got over, between painted scenes and real people " (between the painted cake, my correspondent would say, and real currants), and complained that " the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity, the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard " became, by the fact of reality-representation, a vulgar stabber.

THE FILM HERO

Nothing succeeds like excess, says Lord Somebody in the play. What would the world do without exaggeration? It is a vital necessity. Children cry for it. It unites the United States. It brings the prognostications of Dean Inge and Max's caricatures into a concatenation accordingly. It is the soul of advertisement and the corner-stone of politics. Yet nobody is deceived. We just keep it up because we like it; we exaggerate for exaggeration's sake. It is hygienic, great fun, and exhilarates by giving you a sense of being "in the movement." That is the secret of super-popularity. Mere popularity is quite another thing; it often has some connexion, to be traced by diligent research, with merit. But there is "no d——d nonsense" of that sort about super-popularity, which is wholly independent of the object and attests only the subjective preference for exaggeration, for making a big thing bigger, for rounding up the figures. In that way we are all megalomaniacs, not for ourselves, which would be morbid, but for somebody else, generally a perfect stranger, which is altruistic, refreshing, and *un beau geste*.

I speak metaphorically, for there was nothing

beautiful in the physical gestures of the lusty youths who a few days ago in London mobbed the world's supremely super-popular hero. To speak frankly, and from the evidence of the illustrated papers, they were the most unprepossessing lot I ever set eyes on. A cheering, grinning crowd is never a beautiful object, but this one perhaps " abused the privilege " of unloveliness accorded to crowds. In some parts of the earth worshippers of idols smear their heads with dust and gash their bodies. Here they simply made hideous faces. The idol himself was as impassive and inscrutable as every other idol. " Quiet and *soigné* and slenderly graceful " is E. V. L.'s account of him in private life. To be thus admired by E. V. L. strikes me as the finest feather in the hero's cap. There was nothing quiet, or *soigné*, or graceful about the crowd of worshippers. Far be it from me to cast that up against them. They were doing the world's work ; they were, in the Johnsonian phrase, " carrying on the system of life " ; they were ministering to the human need for exaggeration.

But your " perfect stranger," some one will object, how do you make that out ? Isn't the very quintessence of this man's popularity the familiar acquaintance of all of us with his notorious face and figure ? Is there a better known man in the whole world ? I answer, Yes and No. We all know the transient embarrassed phantom of him, his adumbration on a screen, his " moving picture." This is his

film-twin, his dumb " double," not his live, solid, flesh-and-blood self. We want to verify this portrait by the original. These many years the real man has been " wrop in mistry." For it is the singular office of the film industry to perpetuate the instantaneous, to wind it round a reel, to pack it in a tin box and to send it all over the world. Thus the portable contents of this tin box have an existence of their own, quite apart from the generating cause, the film player ; and, indeed, will keep him for ever alive, though the man himself be dead and worms have eaten him. If this were a world of philosophers it would be content to let its film heroes lead this " double life " ; it would remember that the cosmos is but a web of shifting phenomena, wherein the distinction between real and apparent is purely verbal ; it would not dream of dropping the shadow in order to grasp the substance, itself but another shadow. Plato's celebrated cave would thus provide " all the comforts of home." But this is asking too much of our weak human nature, which continually persists in setting up its false distinctions of real and unreal, which wants all the more to see its film hero as a fact because it has grown to know and love him as a fiction. Besides this general curiosity to penetrate a mystery there is always the vague hope of the unexpected, the *inédit ;* there is always, the curious ones think, the off-chance that the truth may be stranger than fiction, and that the original may reveal features that the portrait has never

succeeded in recording. This gives an added glamour of romance to the crowd's pursuit of the hero in the flesh. Yes, and does not the romantic hope fulfil itself when you find that the hero, so epileptic, so dishevelled, so grotesque on the screen, is in reality " quiet and *soigné* and slenderly graceful " ? Imagine the thrill that must have vibrated through E. V. L. when he made this discovery ! " Persons one would wish to have seen " is a famous essay of Hazlitt's ; it deals with many great or curious figures, from Shakespeare to One whose name is too sacred for mention here. Well, the crowd who mobbed the super-popular film hero at his hotel door were simply exemplifying the craving discussed in Hazlitt's essay. And then, as Victorian novelists used to say, a strange thing happened. They looked for their old familiar friend of the screen and found, instead, something quiet and *soigné* and slenderly graceful. It was like conjuring up Shakespeare and finding Bacon.

Think, again, of the difference between popularity and super-popularity. A little more, and how much it is ! Merely popular, the film hero would just have made his way about the town on his merits, would have been cordially welcomed wherever he made himself known, would, perhaps, have had to bow his acknowledgments from a box when he visited the playhouse, and they might have arranged a banquet for him as they did for Dickens, Pasteur, Anatole France, and other minor lights. But once

the world sees a sporting chance of turning popularity into super-popularity, of playing its favourite game of exaggeration, of multiplying figures beyond the reach of statistics, of making, in a word, of a big thing the biggest thing on earth, mark the effect on the object. In public, he has to be protected by the police. In private, he has to have an unofficial bodyguard of select friends. Even from these he has occasionally to hide. No wonder he is " slenderly " graceful. A " fatty " would have died under it. There is nothing in all history like this life of the super-popular hero, save perhaps that of Louis Quatorze at Versailles. But E. V. L. is a more good-natured Saint-Simon. The old hero was Le Roi Soleil. The new is Le Pître Soigné.

PUPPETRY

It is an immense comfort, an assurance of one's own permanent individuality in a world of never-ceasing change, to find that one preserves at least one taste unaltered. Ibsen's plays, once my delight, now stare at me from the bookshelf, forlorn, with nothing to say to me. Thackeray I used to adore, and, indeed, to celebrate with libations at the Titmarsh Club; to-day I cannot bear to reopen him. Nothing is so disconcerting as this consciousness of "forsaken causes and forgotten beliefs"; you seem to have become the sport of circumstance and the whirligig of time. I rejoice, then, to find, at long intervals, that I still share the taste of Partridge, who "loved a puppet-show of all the pastimes upon earth." But time, though it leaves my taste for them intact, affects the puppets themselves. It had affected them, improved them rather (for change in the arts always strikes a contemporary as improvement), even in Partridge's day. His friend, the puppet-master, bore witness of this. "The present age," said the master, "was not improved in any thing so much as in their puppet-shows; which, by throwing out Punch and his wife Joan, and such idle trumpery, were at last brought to be

a rational entertainment." To-day they have reached a further stage in their evolution. While Punch and his wife Joan, or Judy, still survive in back streets, and, with all respect to the puppet-master, are deservedly esteemed there, the rational entertainment has passed into the hands of true artists, sculptors and the like, and become, as the French say, "stylized." The puppets are little marvels of the sculptor's art, as delicate in their miniature elegance as figures of Tanagra. The plays they act have a literary quality, a sense of the past, and at their best a touch of poetry. In short, morsels for epicures.

Such, at any rate, they have become in the hands of a young wood-carver, Mr. William Simmonds, whose puppets (out of action then, without their wires, like actors behind the scenes) first arrested my attention at the Theatrical Exhibition in South Kensington, and who recently brought them to life before a select company at what Fielding calls "a private and eleemosynary treat." Of the half-dozen items on the programme, the one that charmed me most—though the whole thing was sheer enchantment—was "The Woodland." This, with its mythological creatures in the foreground —"Nymphës, faunës and armadriadës," as the contriver quoted from Chaucer (it shows you to what a pitch puppetry has been raised, when the programme quotes Chaucer!)—suggested a picture by some painter of the *cinquecento* illustrating a

short story from his medieval legend series by Anatole France. If only I could dip my pen in that master's ink-pot to describe it! Failing that, I cannot do better than transcribe the concisely phrased "argument" from the programme. "As the curtain rises *Little Faun* is discovered playing in the wood. The sound of the hunt is heard and a *Stag* runs through, followed by a *Forester*, searching. The *Stag* falls dead and is found by *Little Faun*, who is showing his distress when the *Forester* returns and hides behind a bush. *Little Faun* fetches *Young Centaur*, but he can do nothing, and they then fetch the *Dryad*, who succeeds in healing the *Stag*.

"The *Stag* bounds away, and the scene ends in a wild dance of joy between the two Fauns.

"The *Forester* comes out from his hiding-place and returns home in wonder."

The mere technical skill shown in this piece is a marvel. The dying stag's chest heaves and falls. Little Faun twirls high in the air and squats on the ground as a faun should, but as you would have supposed no puppet could. Young Centaur kicks out with his hind legs. The Forester kneels behind his bush as easily as though he were flesh and blood. The wild dance of joy between the two Fauns is wild indeed but in perfect unison. It is almost impossible to think that these tiny figures are all wire-pulled; they seem to be endowed with life. But what, after all, is the great delight is not so much the nimbleness of Mr. Simmonds's fingers as the freshness and

delicacy of his fancy. The thing reminded me, I can scarcely say why, of one of my favourite papers in Hazlitt's " Table Talk "—" On a Landscape by Nicolas Poussin "—the paper in which he talks of Poussin's picture of the shepherds in the Vale of Tempe going out on a spring morning and coming to a tomb with the inscription :—*Et Ego in Arcadia Vixi*. Perhaps it was the glimpse of the " Nymphës, faunës and armadriadës " so dear to Poussin. Perhaps it was the feeling that I, too, while looking on at this dainty, semi-classical scene, had been in Arcadia.

Fielding's puppet-master boasts that his " figures are as big as the life and they represent the life in every particular." Not so Mr. Simmonds's. These, I think, are not more than a foot high, if as much, and, though they represent the life in every particular, it is not ours but theirs. There is something uncanny about it, because, while their limbs move, their faces are set. It is a life in which, while it is the easiest thing in the world to dance, to spring your own height or more in the air, to twist your limbs into knots, it is difficult to walk, still more difficult to sit down, and quite impossible to pick up a handkerchief or hand a letter. Thus you cannot have a puppet-show *Macbeth*, because, when Lady Macbeth has to say " Give *me* the daggers," she could only drop them with a clash which would wake up the whole castle. You cannot have a puppet-show *Hamlet*, because Ophelia couldn't carry

her flowers, still less distribute them; if she tried, there would be rue for *her*.

Difficult though it is, as I say, for the puppets to sit down, Mr. Simmonds manages it. In "Puppets' Holiday" they all enter and successfully take their seats at—what do you think? A *puppet-show*. This is an ingenious idea—puppets looking at puppets more minute than themselves, a puppet-show within a puppet-show, puppetry, to speak mathematically, with the square root extracted. And you note that the microscopic puppets are as neatly articulated and dance as accurately as the larger ones. The fact is, puppets of whatever dimensions have this advantage over human actors—they are made for what they do, their nature conforms exactly to their destiny.

CHARLES I.'S INFIRMITY

In a recent issue of *The Times* a correspondent adverted to a comment of mine on Mr. Thorndike's performance in the revived *Charles I.* I had remarked that the actor was " slow of speech," and the correspondent says :—" Mr. Thorndike is quite right. Charles was slow of speech. He could hardly speak at all until he was about ten years of age, and always suffered from an impediment in his speech. This caused him to be very quiet and reserved, and, when he did speak, to do so slowly and deliberately." This is an interesting historical detail of which I, for one, was ignorant ; but knowledge of this piece of history, had I possessed it, would in no way have modified my comment on the actor's performance. The correspondent's argument that the actor was " right " in reproducing in the Charles of the drama a certain peculiarity of the Charles of history is a symptom of a by no means uncommon confusion between history and drama, which it may be worth while to look into.

Just how far would the correspondent have the actor carry the duplication of the real by the dramatic Charles ? Whether the real Charles spoke slowly or not, we know very well that he did not speak

the words (except the historic "remember!") spoken by the stage Charles, for the simple reason that he had not the advantage of living on into the nineteenth century and reading the work of Mr. W. G. Wills. Nor did he, in fact, converse, as he does in fiction, with his wife, his courtiers, and Cromwell in blank verse. An historian who represented him as doing so we should at once dismiss as no historian, but a liar; but, when Mr. Wills and Mr. Thorndike represent him as doing so, nobody thinks of calling either of them a liar. We apply, then, different criteria to history and drama. We look to one for truth and to the other for beauty. To ask about this or that detail of the drama (*e.g.*, Charles's slowness of speech), "Is it true?" is to be merely irrelevant.

In the case of historical drama, however, there are some obvious reservations to be noted. Truth, though it is no criterion of artistic merit, is there a limitation of the artist's scope. If Mr. Wills had written a *Charles I.* which showed the king chopping off Cromwell's head, it might have been a fine play; but we should have to say it was misnamed. For it is really a question of nomenclature. Goethe said that for the poet there are no historical personages, but that, at times, he does history the honour to take from it certain names and give them to the creatures of his brain. Yes, only he must fit the names with some regard to the known facts. Mr. Shaw writes a *Cæsar and Cleopatra* in which he gives

these historically famous names to two creatures of his brain ; they are really " Shavian " figments, the products of his own temperament and imagination quite as much as his Candida or his Captain Bluntschli ; but they pass for Cæsar and Cleopatra because their actions are not flagrantly at variance with the known facts. I remember an erudite friend telling me of his delight with the so-called " Cæsar " because it so neatly bore out Mommsen—a sincere, but exquisitely irrelevant, tribute. So Mr. Drinkwater writes a *Mary Stuart*, wherein the Queen is the product of his own imagination—helped, when the play comes to the stage, by a charming actress's—but he takes care to keep his imagination within the bounds of the known facts. He doesn't make Rizzio King of Scotland, or Darnley assassinate Bothwell. Mr. Wills's aspersion on the character of Cromwell is an instance of the poetic imagination getting " out of bounds " ; it has failed to respect the known facts, and has been condemned accordingly. But note that this is an historical, not an æsthetic, condemnation.

So marked is this subservience of historical drama to accepted facts that the theatre will hardly give a hearing to any new reading of these facts, however well certified by historical research. A dramatist, for example, who tried to put Froude's Henry VIII. on the stage would find himself beating against a dead wall of prejudice. H. B. Irving wrote a book to whitewash Judge Jeffreys ; but had he *acted* a

white-washed Jeffreys, he would have got what the players call "the bird." Flaubert resented this petrifaction of history by drama, complaining (in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*) that on the stage "Richelieu was always cruel, Louis XI. always kneeling to the leaden figures in his hat." If drama tends thus to limit history, history, as we have seen, limits the free play of drama. Everybody knows Aristotle's saying in the "Poetics" that "Poetry is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history"—aiming, as it does, at universal truths, and not bound down by empirical fact.

To return to Mr. Thorndike, from whom perhaps we are getting rather far, if his slow delivery as Charles I. has been deliberately adopted as a detail of historic "correctness" (as our correspondent seems to suppose), he has forgotten the actor in the historical student. Whatever Charles's infirmity of speech may have been, it does not absolve an actor delivering blank verse on the stage from the actor's primary duty of easy and fluent elocution.

DRAMATIZED NOVELS

Once more a dramatized novel, *If Winter Comes*, raises the general question. People will not be restrained from turning novels into plays by considerations of art; economic pressure will prevail as it always does. Thousands of readers who have been pleased by a successful story assume that they will be pleased by the same story told in the theatre; further, they have a certain curiosity to see how their old friend will look in new surroundings. Managers are eager to gratify them; a dramatized novel has this advantage in their eyes over an original play, that the matter of it has already been tried on the reading public and found to please; the odds, they think, are at any rate in favour of its pleasing their public. Thus, the demand always anticipates the supply. It is only not equalled by it through non-economic causes: human inertia, for the most part, and, in rare cases, the artistic conscience.

You have written a successful novel, and a theatre manager, or a popular player who has "seen himself" as the hero, tempts you with an offer for it. You have only just to turn it into dramatic shape, and your fortune is assured. What do you do?

It seems the easiest thing in the world. You have only to cut out the descriptions, turn the narrative into stage-directions, and make the dialogue continuous. You will make the minimum of alterations, because, for one thing, that is less trouble and, for another, you are naturally fond of the story and the characters you have created. They have become part of you, it goes against the grain to touch them. And when you have thus followed the line of least resistance, what do you find is the result? As a rule, *monstrum horrendum informe ingens*, something amorphous, unrecognizable, impossible. "Oh," you think, "this is because I'm not familiar with their confounded stage-tricks. I'll call in an expert to lick it into shape." But your expert is almost as dominated by your novel as you are; he does perhaps "jine your flats" here and there and "cuts" a little more freely. His patchwork is a little more successful than yours. But a patchwork remains something very different from a play, which is an organic growth.

The one thing necessary has escaped you. What you have to do with your novel is to *forget it* and start afresh. This may perhaps strike you as a counsel of perfection. What, is all your precious labour to be thrown away? Not so, for a thing once done cannot be undone; in starting your play you will still remain the man who has written that novel, it will still be latent in your mind. Your characters and their mutual relations, the main

incidents of your story, will be part of your subconscious self; above all, your governing idea, that which gives your novel its unity and virtue, will still ineluctably possess you. But you will now be thinking these materials out all over again, and thinking them out in terms of your new medium, as something to be acted by real people on a platform before an audience instead of something to be read by individuals in their parlours. With the new medium you will have to reckon with a new perspective, a new light and shade, a new scale of values. But your imagination, having absorbed the old subject-matter, and, so to speak, re-fused it, will find it run readily into the new mould. Your original mistake was, in fact, trying to mould unfused lumps of ready-made matter into a new shape.

But why, I think I can hear the successful novelist asking, why should I take all this trouble, when it is the last thing my dear public demand of me? What my public want is a play that reminds them of the novel, the satisfaction, in short, of that curiosity you have mentioned to see "what it looks like" in the theatre. They want to resume acquaintance with their old friends, to have the thrill of recognizing Mark Sabre in the familiar person of Mr. Owen Nares, of perceiving that a woman of charm like Miss Grace Lane can still plausibly be as stupid as Mrs. Sabre, and of noting that Mr. Tarver Penna scrupulously reproduces the sniff or the snort (this is a guess, for I have clean forgotten the book) of Mr. Twyning in

the novel. If I thought it all out afresh, says the novelist, I should at once have my public reproaching me: "but Mark doesn't say *that*," "Lady Tybar doesn't do *this* in the book," and "what, pray, has become of" so and so? Well, if the novelist is content that his play shall be merely complementary to the novel, something rather puzzling on the face of it to which the novel is the key—but I cannot suppose that a novelist who, as such, is an artist is so ready to forgo artistic aims for practical ends when he turns to the stage. And, after all, I am not so sure about the practical ends. Playgoers are not by nature readers. It is safe to say that the majority of a theatrical audience will not have read the novel.

With classic novels, known to all the world, the case is, of course, different. No adapter for the stage may venture to think these out afresh for himself. He must reproduce the original as faithfully as he can. It is, in fact, like dramatizing history. You may re-imagine for yourself a whitewashed Henry VIII. or Richard III., but you may not venture to put him on the stage, where received opinion rules. And so the safest rule is not to dramatize classic novels at all (save romances of pure external adventure like "The Three Musketeers" or "Treasure Island"), for they have been imagined in terms of one medium, and yet you cannot afford to re-imagine them in terms of another. Can we not all remember with a shiver certain stage versions of Scott and Dickens and Thackeray?

ART AS LIBERATION

Now once upon a time there lived at Naples a man named Benedetto Croce, who wrote a book called "Estetica," and this book exhibited views about the nature of art that greatly perturbed the Tolstoyans. For art, said Croce, was nothing but the coining of intuitions into a definite shape or, in one word, the "expression" of them. This "expression" was not "exteriorization"; it was a mental experience, an internal activity. Robinson Crusoe, for instance, did not need the presence of his man Friday to become an artist; he could (had Defoe so willed) have had æsthetic experiences, imaginations, visions, "all on his own little lonesome."

But the Tolstoyans were all against this. They held that art was *necessarily* a social activity. It was *necessarily* a means of communicating feelings from man to man. The primary impulse of the artist was the desire to communicate with his fellow men; without this desire he was no artist. In other words, art was to the Tolstoyans always a practical activity, not, as to the Croceans, a purely theoretic activity. For the Tolstoyans always had their eye upon social "uplift"; art was nothing to them apart from its use, and its use was to further their

aim of human "fellowship." Disinterested, intellectual curiosity about the essence of art, about the place of æsthetics in a general philosophic scheme—this to them was mere idleness. The old Puritans condemned all art as sheer wickedness, because it was not an activity (as they thought) for the glory of God. The Tolstoyans condemned all art that was not consciously designed for the service of man. Tolstoy himself condemned all art that was not calculated to appeal to the taste and comprehension of the Russian *moujik*. But many things have happened since he so delivered himself. We take many of his opinions with a grain of salt. And we are not, just now, so fond of the Russian *moujik* as we were. So it is not fair to saddle Tolstoyans generally with that opinion.

Nor would it be fair to saddle them with Tolstoy's conclusion that (amongst others) Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, and Beethoven were all "false reputations, made by the critics." I only mention this as an instance of the absurdities into which the theory of art as communication has led, at any rate, one of its exponents. A very different exponent of that theory, sweetly reasonable and persuasive, is Mr. Clutton-Brock. He has recently committed himself to it in commenting upon a book by another exponent of the same theory, Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie. I have not had the advantage of seeing Mr. Abercrombie's book, but Mr. Clutton-Brock quotes enough of it for my present purpose. Mr.

Abercrombie, it seems, " plumps " for the communication theory, and Mr. Clutton-Brock backs him up—or rather, goes one better. (I do not apologize for these colloquialisms, for it helps, I think, in discussing a philosophic point, to use as far as possible the language of everyday life.)

Indeed, I might almost have agreed with Mr. Abercrombie's text, had it not been for Mr. Clutton-Brock's gloss. The artist, says Mr. Abercrombie, " makes his experience communicable." Certainly ; he does that in the very act of expressing it. Every expression is communicable, and nothing is communicable that has not first been expressed. It is all a question of the *order* of procedure. Expression is the essential thing ; communication of the expression, an accidental thing. But Mr. Clutton-Brock inverts this order. " Theorists," he says, " when they talk of expression, do not see that it comes of the effort to communicate and cannot exist without that effort." Well, they do not see it because, like the Spanish Fleet, it is not in sight. The effort to objectify your impressions, to give them shape, to express them, does not necessarily imply an effort to communicate them to others. It is an effort of the artist to free himself of them, to be delivered of them. *Liberavi animam meam* is the artist's cry ; he has found relief in the act of expression—though the expression be unheard, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

But that is talking to himself, and Mr. Clutton-

Brock will not have it that the artist can talk to himself. He makes an artful appeal to metaphysics, to the theory that merges the individual mind in the universal mind. " The artist," he says, " consciously or unconsciously speaks to all mankind, to the whole universe even ; and he does believe in this universal audience, of which, because it is universal, he himself is also a part, so that he can enjoy and experience his own art, not as himself, the artist, but as a member of the universal audience. He can try it on himself and be in the relation to himself of audience to artist, and that relation is part of his delight. But he cannot speak to himself alone. It is only because he passes into the universal, becomes one of all mankind, that it is possible for him thus to address himself." Well and good. But this is a very different thing from the " communication " Mr. Abercrombie and Mr. Clutton-Brock himself began by talking of. The artist who cannot but address himself to the universal audience because he is part of it is in a very different case from the artist who is addressing himself, like Molière, to his cook or, like Tolstoy, to the *moujik*.

Of course, the difficulty the " expressionists " have to contend with is that they can only appeal to the philosophic man, while the " communicationists " have the ear of the empirical man, the man in the street. For, to the plain man, the " work of art " will always be the communicated thing, the physical fact of painted canvas or of sounds produced by the

vibration of catgut. He boggles at the thought that the real work of art precedes and is independent of this physical record; that it is not a physical thing at all, but mental; that it consists in the artist's image, vision—in the form in which the artist has coined his intuitive experience.

Yet he will have to understand this if he is ever going to construct a coherent system of æsthetics. How, for instance, will he get a definition of beauty out of the communication theory? Mr. Clutton-Brock seems to suggest one. "Art succeeds only if it satisfies its audience." But what audience? The artist's ideal audience, I suppose Mr. Clutton-Brock would reply. What is that? An audience of men identical, I take it, with his ideal self, his best self. Art succeeds, then, only if it satisfies the artist. And it only satisfies him when it is the perfect expression of his intuitive experience. Which is precisely the expressionist's theory of beauty.

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

Of the many illuminating articles that *The Times* published in its American Number on Independence Day there was none that I read with so much interest as the contribution by Mr. George A. Dorsey, of New York, on American civilization. It was not Mr. Dorsey's convincing explanation of the rarity of genius in the United States: "Most of us to-day have no time to become geniuses." "To become" is rather delicious, to those who hold that the genius, like the poet, *nascitur, non fit.* And to the plea of "no time" (a great favourite, by the way, in this country with Civil Service candidates who are floored by their examination-papers) one might perhaps quote Alceste's reply to the gentleman who had written a sonnet in a quarter of an hour:—

Voyons, Monsieur; le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire.

Nor was it Mr. Dorsey's declaration that America "offers such opportunities for the gratification of every normal human aspiration and ambition as are afforded by no other country on earth." The inhabitants of Europe, not to speak of the Dominions, would, and do every day, make precisely the same claim for their own particular fatherland. No, it was neither of these statements taken separately.

It was the one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin, underlying both of them, that attracted me. Here was an American, naïvely putting forward, as distinctively American, characteristics that are common to the human race. For we are all, every man Jack of us, in respect of becoming geniuses, suffering from lack of time. And we all believe that our own country "offers such advantages, etc., etc." Mr. Dorsey is too modest when he describes himself as "of New York"; without knowing it, he is a Citizen of the World.

Mr. Dorsey's excuse for thus substituting the particular for the general is to be found, I think, among those of his own household. It appears that thirty Americans have conspired to produce what he calls a formidable volume, which decides, on their unanimous testimony, that there is no civilization in America. Now, it so happens that one of the thirty, Mr. J. E. Spingarn, has reprinted his contribution as a separate pamphlet, "Scholarship and Criticism in the United States," and has been so good as to send me a copy. My heart goes out to Mr. Spingarn because he is a disciple of a philosopher whom I love and about whom I am in the habit of plaguing my readers to the pitch, I daresay, of exasperation. He is, that is to say, an out-and-out Crocean. His "Creative Criticism" was a valuable piece of Crocean propaganda. His earlier history of "Literary Criticism in the Renaissance" has been translated into Italian, and received the benediction of the

Master. His present pamphlet reveals in every line the same inspiration.

And so one is not surprised to find him setting forth the three needs of American criticism as a right æsthetic, a sound scholarship, and a sensitive taste. What does surprise me is the restrictive epithet "American." Here Mr. Spingarn seems to me to substitute particular for general as naïvely as Mr. George A. Dorsey. For the three needs he specifies, far from being peculiar to America, are the needs of criticism all the world over. It is not only in America that criticism, for the lack of a systematic æsthetic, is distracted by guerrilla warfare about "literary" theories.

> It [American criticism] has neither inherited nor created a tradition of æsthetic thought. For it every critical problem is a separate problem, a problem in a philosophic vacuum, and so open for discussion to any astute mind with a taste for letters. Realism, classicism, romanticism, imagism, impressionism, expressionism, and other terms or movements as they spring up, seem ultimate realities instead of matters of very subordinate concern to any philosophy of art—mere practical programmes which bear somewhat the same relation to æsthetic truth that the platform of the Republican Party bears to Aristotle's "Politics."

Yes, but you have precisely the same state of affairs in England, in France, in Italy, in Spain. The American policy of "holding aloof" has no validity in the field of criticism. There we are all tarred with the same brush.

One American peculiarity I do see. For one knows how the younger American critics chafe under it and protest in vain against it. I mean the

"moralistic" trend of American criticism, that vitiated so much of our own English criticism (notably Samuel Johnson's) in the eighteenth century. Here, despite Mr. George A. Dorsey, we must lay the blame on Puritanism. This ancient and inbred strain in the American people (which, of course, has been so immense a national asset in the world of conduct) has been a seriously retarding influence for that people in the world of pure literature. The conception of literature as a moral influence, says Mr. Spingarn, "goes back to the Græco-Roman rhetoricians and moralists, and after pervading English thought from Sidney to Matthew Arnold, finds its last stronghold to-day among the American descendants of the Puritans."

When, then, Mr. Dorsey complains that it is inconsistent of his thirty Americans to treat Puritanism at once as a crime and a virtue, I think they will have an easy answer for him. It is a practical virtue, they may say, and an artistic crime. More particularly, as Mr. Spingarn insists, it entails bad criticism. It was for so long a baleful influence here in England (where, for that matter, it is even now by no means extinct) that I hope Mr. Dorsey will not consider me impertinent for commenting on it. That, indeed, is my point. These American gentlemen have been talking of common mistakes and grievances of humanity as though they were exclusively American. They must let us claim our share of the burden, and offer our fraternal sympathy.

SYMPATHY

The theatre has travelled far from the primitive Aristotelian pity and terror. They are old unhappy far-off things. Terror? *Fi donc!* Nobody is fat or old in Ba-ath, and nobody is terrified in the modern theatre—except at the Grand Guignol, in an amused frame of mind, the mood in which you would witness with a grin a gory street accident which you happened to know was only a "fake" in rehearsal for the films. Even when the antique horrors are revived—say when M. Mounet-Sully played Œdipus—they are revived with a difference. The old "bite" has gone out of them; they are a brandy, once fiery, that age has turned to sugar. You note the excitements of your remote forbears with, at best, a languid curiosity. The candid confess the truth: the thing is simply a bore. Richard Crookback was a sheer terror to the groundlings at the Blackfriars or Paris Garden. But Irving knew that the Lyceum pit would never take him in that way, and so made him a Punchinello. We cannot stomach Iago, as Shakespeare saw him. So we take to "fancying" him, as collectors fancy a queer specimen. We read the Renaissance into him, and talk about Benvenuto Cellini. Generally the

actor meets us half-way, and makes him a humorous eccentric, so that we may have our laugh out, without apology.

Pity ? It is as obsolete as the art of the Chantrey Bequest. Astolfo must already have found it among the lost things in the moon. *Lear* is now hidden on the back shelf of unactable plays. To be sure, we can be sorry in a mild, polite sort of way for many of the victims of the cruel old dramatists. Irving ennobled and sentimentalized the Shylock for whom Shakespeare had little but derision and contempt. Molière laughed, and his contemporaries laughed with him, at Alceste. It would be as seemly to laugh in church as at a modern performance of *Le Misanthrope*. Two people have been playing Alceste in Paris, M. Lucien Guitry and M. Jacques Copeau, and both, according to a writer in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, gave him the graceful droop of a weeping willow. This means that we are no longer expected to laugh at him, still less to pity him, but to tender him our respectful sympathy.

Sympathy—it has become the fashionable emotion in our modern fiction, as sensibility was in the eighteenth century and wonder in the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth. Fiction, I say, because the thing is as apparent in the popular novel as in the theatre. See the recent correspondence about "If Winter Comes." See also the most popular of all modern novelists, Nat Gould. His stories are not literature, artistically he doesn't

" exist " (though he has a gift for the simple, short sentence which I think even the much-belauded author of " If Winter," etc., might envy); but it is just a writer of this kind who shows which way the emotional wind blows. Nat Gould's hero owners and riders are sympathetic; his horses are sympathetic; even his bookmakers are sympathetic.

It would be a good parlour game to investigate the geographical distribution of national sympathies in fiction. The younger school in Paris seem just now to be lavishing their sympathy on the frequenters of *brasseries*, night clubs, and velodromes. Here is one of the school, M. Paul Morand, in *Ouvert la Nuit*, lavishing his sympathy upon a female anarchist and a record-breaker of the " track." In Italy Guido da Verona lavishes his upon dancing girls and incestuous heroes. In Spain the voluminous author of *Sangre y Arena*, Señor Blasco Ibañez (to my thinking, hardly more of a " littery gent " than Nat Gould), keeps his for the toreros and the bulls, but withholds it—Spain appears to be the last refuge of cruelty in fiction—from the disembowelled horses. And there is a young Irishman, Mr. James Joyce, who in his " Ulysses " (privately published, for excellent reasons, and I don't want to borrow a copy of it) is said to carry his sympathies into the very latrines. You never can tell where your sympathies will lead you.

Of course sympathy, like every other fashion in

literature or out of it, is on the wane. It will by and by be as extinct as sensibility and wonder. Our young post-war lions will see to that. Sympathy was never a foible of adolescence. Indeed, one of the most brilliant books of the new generation, Mr. Aldous Huxley's "Crome Yellow"—a book which its young poet might describe as, in these days of flatulent literature, a valuable carminative—seems to be founded on antipathy. But sympathy is still the stand-by of those remarkable products known as "best-sellers." And in the theatre, always behindhand, it is still in full vogue.

But how diversely it works there! Two nights running, we have had a new play from Mr. Galsworthy and another from the late Mr. Haddon Chambers. With Mr. Chambers, the older hand, sympathy was a datum. Every one of his personages had it as a matter of course. The eponymous heroes of his *Card Players*, three of them rogues and the fourth a fool, would sooner have played farthing points or forsworn the devil's books altogether than have forfeited your sympathies. The hero's broken heart was as sympathetic as the heroine's broken English. The parson who calls his pipe his old friend and likes a drop of whisky o' mornings, the *ingénue* in spotless white who sits down to play the tune "daddy" has just been humming, the second villain who says, "I love you," to the first and means it, the third who yearns for little old New York between 40th and 50th—it was one prolonged

debauch of sympathy. How different Mr. Galsworthy, who presents you with people, congenitally as you might say, unsympathetic—callow war-poets in " sports coats " and baby-killing girls and British matrons busy with household accounts—and tries his best by ratiocination to induce you to regard them as sympathetic ! For all our playwrights are tarred with the same brush. All save Mr. Shaw, who seems to have a morbid passion for unsympathetic characters. That is to say, they must engage his sympathies, though they forgo ours.

ON AND OFF THE STAGE

The desire for sympathy has much to answer for in art. In life, too, no doubt, conduct is too often influenced by it. To stand well with those among whom your lot is cast, to please them, not to offend them—this motive often weights the scale in the balance of right and wrong. Few of us have the courage to do the " unpopular " thing, *quand même.* As to saying the unpopular thing, that is not to be thought of, for we should soon be without any listener to say it to. After-dinner oratory is the extreme case, but all oratory presupposes the desire for sympathy. Even the pulpit, as the Rev. Charles Honeyman knew. It is the very existence of the world in society, where those present exchange sympathies at the expense of those absent—or out of hearing. Indeed, proximity, visibility, actual meeting face to face, seems to be a necessary precedent to the desire for sympathy. It arises, to be sure, between correspondents, for letters are but written conversation. Yet it is easier to be unsympathetic by letter than in an interview. " I will go and see him " means, I expect to find my presence an aid to sympathy ; but " You shall have my answer in writing " means nine times out of ten a refusal.

It is in the theatre that the desire for sympathy has the most notable results. That is because theatrical art brings the artist face to face with his public. The novel, written and read in solitude, is more free to express its author's feelings and thoughts; his public is not staring him in the face. Any one who has written, say, a lecture and then delivered it will know the difference. Points that seemed to him telling pass, as people say, without a hand, and others of no moment, often mere "padding," stuck in as an after-thought just to "jine his flats," get rounds of applause. He had reckoned without the sympathies of his audience. Next time he will be tempted to think of them, to select his points and turn his phrases with an ear for the possible applause—and will probably ruin his lecture.

That is what the bad dramatist does in the theatre. Instead of letting his observation of life and his imagination play freely round his theme and his characters he is beset by the obsession of making them "sympathetic." Hence the "happy ending" so often imposed upon a story which, according to all probability and common sense, demands an unhappy one. Hence the sugary "sentiment" because the ladies like it, and the moral and social orthodoxies because they *are* orthodoxies, and the stupid "comic relief" because the stupid among the public must be relieved. Hence, too, the "sympathetic personage" in his several forms—pure and mixed—

on the one hand, the super-heroic hero and the immaculate heroine of melodrama, on the other, the spend-thrift and gambler who is so good to his mother, the family friend who is so wise and kind for both parties to a dispute, the old hunks who is melted by the innocent prattle of his grandchild, the rogue with the irresistible laugh, the tosspot who is a humorist and a philosopher. But this last, you will say, is Falstaff, and Falstaff is not bad art, but the very finest. Yes, to be sure, for some personages are " sympathetic " in themselves, were, so to speak, born so. I have been speaking only of those that the dramatist has made " sympathetic " to gratify a popular demand.

And that demand is always reinforced by the actor. An anecdote is told of a stage version of " The Egoist," offered to the late Sir George Alexander, who returned it to the adapter with the request that the hero might be made more " sympathetic." You may laugh ; but just consider the hard case of the actor. He is performing before a miscellaneous crowd, very few of whom have either critical insight or imagination, but most of whom have the average practical man's grasp of what he calls " facts " ; the familiar, the actual, the personal. That is to say, the majority see the actor rather than the part. Indeed, they " follow " their favourite actor, whatever his parts, just as outsiders on the turf " follow " a favourite jockey, because that is simpler than estimating the qualities of the horses

he mounts. Of the actor's real difficulties they know nothing; giving substance to a "thin" part, form to a shapeless one, reality and life to one that the dramatist had left sketchy and anæmic. And when the actor fails to scale the topmost peaks of a "great" part, they will be none the wiser, so long as he gives them something vivid, picturesque, personal; they will enthusiastically accept Mr. Moscovitch's Shylock, as though Shakespeare's Shylock were nothing more than strong racial peculiarities, and Grasso's Othello, as though there were nothing in Othello beyond the wild beast. They have not imagined the part for themselves, and, therefore, cannot detect either where the actor has supplemented his author, or where he has fallen short of him. Is it to be wondered at, then, if the actor, knowing that his really artistic share in his part will pass unappreciated save by the few, should crave for a "sympathetic part," wherein he is sure, beforehand, of the general, if unenlightened, applause? For applause he must have; it is the very breath of his being.

What a difference the presence or absence of "sympathy" in a part may make to the applause we saw the other day when a tragic actress of real talent was appearing in an adaptation from the French. For all observers of discernment she was on her usual level; she played neither better nor worse than before; but she played to a cold house and was generally declared to have failed in the part.

All, simply and solely, because the part was "unsympathetic." And the players know this so well that you may see them making every effort to turn an unsympathetic into a sympathetic part before your eyes. Why else did Irving "ennoble" Shylock? Or turn Richard III. into a kind of Punchinello, hoping, like the fellow who "knew he was no gentleman," to "pass it off with a pleasantry"? Why else is the part of the female adventuress, or spy, or crook, or other "unsympathetic" personage invariably assigned to the prettiest woman in the cast?

IN CRITICISM

We have been considering some of the effects upon stage-art of the desire for sympathy. But this desire influences the public " in front " as well as the artists themselves, affects not merely the way in which plot or character is shaped by the playwright, or the way in which his part is presented by the player, but also the way in which opinion about these things finds expression among the people looking on. I do not speak of the preliminary stage to the formation of opinion, the direct impression made by what he sees upon the spectator, though even at that stage it might be not impossible to detect the secret workings of the desire for sympathy. Without pledging ourselves to every item in the so-called science of " collective psychology," we must all admit that, in a crowd, we are conscious of the crowd and our feelings are influenced by it. There is a sort of contagion, a tendency in the feelings of the individual percipient to approximate to those of the crowd in general, which may or may not be attributable to the " imitative instinct " explored by M. Gabriel Tarde and other French inquirers. Anyhow, there seems to be an instinctive need for sympathy at work, which in the theatre tends to bring our

feelings into harmony with those of the rest of the audience. But it is all very vague, and I don't think there is anything more to be profitably said about it.

So soon, however, as our feelings crystallize into opinions, and these opinions are *expressed*, the working of the desire for sympathy, hitherto unconscious, scant, becomes gross, open, palpable. A "public opinion" is created, a formidable fact which we cannot ignore and hesitate to run counter to. I am speaking, bear in mind, of the general public, who deliver opinions by word of mouth, not of the professional critics, whose influence, such as it is, comes in later. As a rule, it is this general, immediate, spoken verdict that settles the fate of a play. If opinion is divided, that of the majority prevails. The intimidated minority is brought over by its desire for sympathy. We do not like to profess unfashionable opinions, and if our loud-voiced, positive neighbours in the stalls are heard declaring that the play is "rotten," we, who had perhaps in our heart found some extenuating circumstances, keep them to ourselves and declare the play to be "rotten," too. Reservations, distinctions, fine shades, cannot live in this atmosphere. They are extinguished in the general verdict. That is why most plays are either dire failures or overwhelming successes. A "public opinion" has been constituted by the rough common sense of the positive-minded, it is swollen by the rest, with their desire for sym-

pathy, and, one way or the other, there is an emphatic verdict.

From all this it is the duty of the responsible critic carefully to hold himself aloof. While the heathen so furiously rage, he should, like Miss Lottie Venne in the farce, "shrink into his shell." He should turn a deaf ear to the "public opinion" of the stalls and the pit. Nay, he should even endeavour to keep himself immune from the "contagion of the crowd," to isolate himself in the very midst of the crowd and to give his feelings and impressions undisturbed play and unrestricted scope. Not otherwise can he hope to address himself to the critic's proper task over a play or any other work of art: first to put himself in the artist's place and recreate the work within himself, then to excogitate a judgment and put it into literary form. Now it is a deplorable fact that many critics never address themselves to this, their proper task. Their desire for sympathy is too much for them, and, instead of scrutinizing their own impressions, they speculate about other people's. They set out not what they think, but what they think other people think they ought to have thought. They become slavish chroniclers of the spoken "public opinion" of the stalls. Mark, I do not say, while it is their duty to ignore this public opinion in forming their own, that they are necessarily to ignore it as a fact, something apart from their own. Indeed, I think it is only right that they should carefully record it, when it is at variance with their own—

should say, in effect, " For such and such reasons, I think the play to be a work of successful art here, of unsuccessful art there ; in sum, a good (or bad) play ; but it is fair to add that, to judge from the applause (or groans), the public thought otherwise." For the verdict of the first-night audience, though it may not be a critical judgment, is an historical fact, something that has actually happened, and is worth recording *pro memoriâ.*

It has, of course, to be borne in mind that there are always certain critics whose judgment faithfully reflects the popular verdict, not because they deliberately seek it and offer it in lieu of their own judgment, but because the two really and truly coincide. These popular-minded critics command by right divine the public sympathy, because through them the public is sympathizing with itself, is abounding, as the French say, in its own sense. Naturally they enjoy immense influence with a public delighted and flattered to find its own opinions invariably served up to it in the critical columns of its daily newspaper. *L'Oncle* Sarcey was the most conspicuous critic of this class in France, as was Mr. Clement Scott in this country. But their criticism, though influential, can hardly be said to have been an influence for good. It broke down just where the average common-sense judgment of the crowd does break down, in confrontation with any new movement in art. Both men, for example, were absolutely " floored " by Ibsen.

After the critics who sympathize too closely with the public come the critics who sympathize too closely with themselves. I mean those who fall in love with their own point of view and turn the facts to suit it. It happens thus. They take a "line," an attitude over the play, indicated, perhaps, in their first sentence. From the outset they see that this line, if kept up (with their first sentence, perhaps, recurring as a sort of "refrain"), will give their article a pattern, a definite articulation, and a neat frame. Thereafter they are under a terrible temptation to ignore altogether, or at any rate to colour, the facts of their subject matter or arguments about the facts which would conflict with the symmetry of their "line" or spoil the appropriateness of their "refrain." . . . I hear some lewd fellow of the baser sort whispering "Set a thief to catch a thief! You seem suspiciously familiar, sir, with this terrible temptation of yours. Perchance some curious examples of its disastrous effects might be culled from your own esteemed writings?" Well, I hardly think so; for *medio de fonte leporum*, amid the delights of critical pattern-weaving, *surgit amari aliquid*, up pops that bitter thing called conscience—and, in the interests of truth, knocks the pattern endways.

JUDGING WITHOUT EXPERIENCING

Was it not Anatole France who said that the last utterance of mankind would be criticism? Two men would be left alone on the earth, and one would say to the other, "How beautiful!" (or "Not half-bad!" or "Rather rotten, what?"), then the earth's crust would break up, and all would be over. Meanwhile, and though nobody that I know of has prophesied the immediate end of the world, human utterance is largely criticism—or else anti-criticism. For, as business is other people's money, so criticism seems, in popular usage, to be other people's opinions. That is why it is generally reprobated. I think the fashionable tone of protest against it is a good sign. It shows that people prefer their own opinions and must be assumed, therefore, to have opinions to prefer. In the bad old days, when critics were regarded as law-givers and a docile world never presumed to question the judgments of Aristotle or the Abbé Batteux, objectors to "the critics" would have been drawn and quartered for high treason. "'Tis what the King says, boy; and that was ever enough for Sir Henry Lee." In more recent times, when "the rules" had become a little flyblown, people still treated eminent critics as their spiritual directors. "Is it fresh?" asked the old lady of

Dan Leno, as the shopman selling the chicken. "Fresh, marm! Can't you see the Government stamp?" To-day all the old ladies insist on smelling the chicken for themselves. The expert witness has been sharply told to stand down. We do not accept the opinions of any other people as authoritative; we are rather affronted by other people having opinions; we are all in a hurry to have opinions of our own.

And it is precisely against that hurry that Mr. Clutton-Brock warns us in an article in the *London Mercury* on "Some Perversities of Criticism." "Perversities," as a matter of course. Criticism has become an Old Aunt Sally at which we are to keep cheerfully shying. But Mr. Clutton-Brock aims straight when he tells us that a besetting sin of critics, professional and amateur, is this hurry to have opinions. We have deposed "the critics," as I have said, from the Judicial Bench; but it is only a case of *ôte-toi, que je m'y mette;* we each of us clamber into the vacant place. We are so prepossessed with the idea of criticism as judgment that we hasten to judge the work under criticism before we have experienced it; before, as Mr. Clutton-Brock happily puts it, we have let it happen to us. This is undoubtedly true, and it is, I think, human nature. I mean that it is an assertion of the natural Ego reacting against the pressure of the work of art; it is a mode of recovering our self-esteem, our sense of personal identity.

And, being so natural, it is, I submit, with all deference to Mr. Clutton-Brock, a perversity rather of the amateur than of the professional critic. For I think it is not unfair to presume that the professed critic has at least something of the critical temperament, or he would not be where he is ; and the true critical temperament includes the sense that one must enjoy, experience, understand, absorb the thing under criticism, as a necessary preliminary to applying principles and judging it. It is the irresponsible amateur who is the less ready to postpone or relinquish his egoism for the necessary stage of receptivity, who is the more intent on having opinions at once, who thinks he cannot afford to " wait and see." I know, at any rate, that it is so in the theatre. I have more than once bewailed the nuisance of the amateurs who rush up to one in the first interval with, " Well, what do you think of it ? Pretty poor stuff, eh ? " The more knowing ones content themselves, as they pass you, with a raised eyebrow and a droop of the mouth. It is useless to tell them that I am just letting it happen to me and shall probably not begin to " think " about it until I am in the taxi. And they would only put me down for an accomplished liar if I told them the whole monstrous truth : that, even in the taxi, a cigarette, the cool air of the night, the lights along the Embankment, are still postponing opinions about the play. These, in fact, do not emerge, if they ever do emerge, until one's first slip of " copy " is well under way.

Meanwhile the amateur critics have already delivered themselves of definite opinions expressed with an emphasis that would frighten any editor in London out of his wits, at the supper table or in the smoking-room or on the top of the omnibus. It is, by the way, these amateur critics, not the professionals, whom the manager ought to fear. It is they, not the Press, who make or mar the fortunes of a play.

Isn't it much the same story at picture galleries ? Mr. Clutton-Brock knows a good deal more about that than I do. But, for my part, I have been often amazed at the rapidity of judgment, the prompt and trenchant verdicts pronounced in my hearing by fashionable dames over pictures which I have hardly begun to see. As I said before, it is human nature. The Ego within us will not be kept back, but must hasten to assert itself by uttering opinions and delivering judgments. If, then, this undue haste is a perversity of criticism, I suggest to Mr. Clutton-Brock that it is still more a perversity of the crowd. The critic, I mean the man with the critical temperament, is naturally contemplative ; a wise passiveness is part of his natural equipment. It is the active, practical persons, the worldlings, the " business " men, the " managing " women, who are in the greatest hurry to have opinions over works of art ; for the simple reason that rapidity of judgment is an asset in this busy, pushing world, and the worldlings carry the habits of that world into the very different world of art.

Mind, I am not defending "the critics." Oh, no. I quite agree that hanging is too good for them. They have all the perversities that Mr. Clutton-Brock finds in them, and many more. But the particular perversity of judging before experiencing belongs, I think, less to them than to the world at large. Let us give the devil his due.

A FORMER GENERATION

A CONTRIBUTOR to *The Times Literary Supplement*, examining the mental attitude of a young French critic, M. Charles du Bos, lets fall a passing allusion which strikes somewhat harshly on my ear. He speaks of " the remoteness of this attitude from the impressionistic criticism of a former generation." A former generation ! Well, Lemaître died during the war, and it is true that M. Anatole France, though his literary activity is, happily, as energetic as ever, now rarely condescends to criticism. But need our contributor have been in such a hurry to rank them among the back numbers and the old, unhappy, far-off things ? Are they not still live influences : actual and present sources of instruction and delight to many people, who, poor innocents, will be shocked to learn that they are out of date ? This haste to divide up the world into pre-war and post-war, past and present generations, which one associates with charming pictures in *Punch* of slim silk-stockinged ankles and white waistcoats at a dance, seems to me a little too frivolous for literary history. The historic spirit flings off the obsession of the passing moment, the glamour of the actual, the tyranny of fashion ; it takes long views and studies

large maps; it hesitates to be cocksure about the novelty of "our" and the antiquity of a "former generation." Indeed, in the perpetual flux of human affairs, this minute attention to the almanac is apt to look somewhat foolish. I forbear from quoting the Heraclitean tag.

After all, there are only two kinds of criticism—the good and the bad; and the value of every criticism depends upon the critic behind it. Of course, he must be intelligent; and we learn without surprise that "the salient quality of M. du Bos's criticism is intelligence." If it were not, M. du Bos would be no critic. But it was also the salient quality of those poor old superannuated critics "of a former generation," MM. Lemaître and France. These happened, however, to be intelligent with liveliness, or, as M. France himself would say, "avec allégresse." They not only understood but enjoyed—indeed, played and gambolled with their subject—and this keen delight they communicate to us, their readers. They were learned, but they wore their learning lightly like a feather. So lightly did they wear it that they provoked Benedetto Croce, a profound æsthetician and of all living men the greatest authority on critical theory, but not blessed with a strong sense of humour, into protesting against their *ricami di fantasia.* "With such a being as man," however, "in such a world as the present one," we cannot afford to quarrel with our pleasure, and if Lemaître *did* compare one of Corneille's heroes to a

Russian nihilist in a modern Paris café, we are not prevented by the freakishness of the comparison from enjoying a glimpse of the type in a new and vivid light. Criticisms are not sermons, though in the hands of some of the exponents of the " new efflorescence " they can be almost as solemn.

Take, for instance, the paragraph which the *Supplement* contributor selects for a specimen of M. du Bos. " La question se subdivise en deux temps " . . . " son travail de décomposition." . . . " qui donnent à mi-descente leur plein rendement " . . . " leur maximum d'activité." Certainly, Lemaître and France never wrote like that ; there was not a ha'porth of the pedant in either of them. And, with all their waywardness of allusion which so vexes Croce, they were never so irrelevant as is M. du Bos when he drags into a critical passage on Proust an appreciation, extravagant and (if I may say so) pompous, of W. S. Landor and his " Imaginary Conversations." He comprehends, we are told, " English literature with a luminous exactitude rare in England." Happily rare, I cannot help thinking.

What strikes those of us who are still belated among the simple pleasures of a former generation is that M. du Bos and the other new efflorescents take themselves a trifle too seriously. They are too complacently pontifical. It is a familiar weakness of criticism, even in former generations. Jeffrey, with his " this will never do," is the leading example. Brunetière was an arch-pontiff, and, as we all know,

it was in reaction against the dogmatism of Brunetière that the so-called impressionistic criticism first made its appearance. And now, in reaction against the impressionists, we have the new efflorescents, with their "surgical" method, and their "cold, faultless, intellectual voice." It is not so much my fault as the fault of my generation, impenitently "former" as it is, if their work leaves me as cold as their voice.

One thing all professional or professed critics, of all the generations and all the colours, dogmatists, impressionists, or intellectualists of the new efflorescence, will do well not to forget; there is a criticism anterior to theirs in formation and, though it puts on no "frills," far more potent. I mean the *spoken*, spontaneous criticism of the world in general. It is improvised behind fans or between the whiffs of a cigar, expressed in conversations or in those written conversations called letters. Most of it is "bad," of course ill-conceived, ill-expressed, and (human nature being what it is) ill-natured. But much of it is surprisingly "good" and can now and then be even exquisite, as when Mme. de Sévigné writes to Mme. de Grignan, or Gray to West, or Edward Fitzgerald to Fanny Kemble. For these were people of taste, and taste is a somewhat more valuable part of the critic's equipment than a surgical method or a cold, faultless, intellectual voice.

A LETTER-WRITER

"LISONS *tout* Mme. de Sévigné," said Sainte-Beuve on a wet day in the country. I have just taken his advice and read her through on several fine days. No, not quite all of her, for my edition is 1806, and I believe many more letters have come to light since then. But the 1806 edition contains quite enough to go on with, and has the compensation of being beautifully printed on a fine ribbed paper that you would look for in vain nowadays. I think you should read Mme. de Sévigné in a choice edition; there was a magnificence about her that seems to demand it; for that matter, one likes one's favourite authors to be delicately printed and handsomely bound. I ask myself why, precisely, she is one of my favourites; for the qualities for which a classic author is held up to our admiration are not always those that recommend him to our secret, intimate taste. Your reason assents to the conventional praise; but what really thrills you has nothing to do with reason—"Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connait pas." Think, for instance, of an author like Hazlitt, so much of whose writing is prolix, improvised, thoroughly bad, and there comes a little intimate, personal touch—a "partridge cooking for

his supper" or that volume of "Love for Love" that he read in the old inn at Alton, with its wainscoted room and its silver tea equipage and the dark portrait of Charles II. over the mantelpiece—that sets you hugging yourself with delight.

So I find it is with Mme. de Sévigné. Her maternal affection simply bores me. I cannot help suspecting, too, that it slightly bored her daughter; for the few letters of response we have from Mme. de Grignan are remarkably cool, not to say chilling. And the *bravura* pieces—the Fouquet trial or the death of Turenne—brilliantly written as they are, leave me comparatively cold. With her literary tastes I cannot sympathize, for she preferred Corneille to Racine and Nicole (whom I cannot pretend to have read) to Pascal. Also she has a morbid passion for sermons, which I do not share. What is it, then, that I do like? Well, shameful as the confession is, I'm afraid I like her scandal-mongering, her little discreetly-veiled allusions to the "carryings on" of the Court beauties. They put volumes into a word, and that word whispered, as it were, behind a fan: "On me mande que l'autre jour, au jeu, *Quanto* avait la tête appuyée familièrement sur l'épaule de son ami; on crut que cette affectation était pour dire, *je suis mieux que jamais.* Mme. de Maintenon est revenue de chez elle: sa faveur est extrême." (*Quanto* was, of course, Mme. de Montespan and "son ami" the King.) What a glimpse that brief paragraph gives you of the Court of Louis XIV.;

the Royal favourite publicly leaning her head on the King's shoulder to let the Court know that she was still in high favour; and in the background, Mme. de Maintenon, quietly awaiting her turn! One might compile from Mme. de Sévigné's letters a catalogue of Royal favourites almost as long as Leporello's *mille e tre;* but the allusions to them and their varying fortunes are as matter-of-fact as though they were extracts from the Court Circular; there is no moralizing, for Mme. de Sévigné, though a virtuous and really pious woman, was no prude. Indeed, she was immensely flattered and pleased when the universal lover, the Sultan among the odalisques, paid her a little compliment when she went to see *Esther* performed at St. Cyr.

Another thing for which one likes Mme. de Sévigné is her hearty, unaffected love of the country. She fled from Paris, on the slightest pretext, to Livry, her little "place" near Paris she was never tired of praising: "Chacun a ses visions plus ou moins marquées. Une des miennes présentement, c'est de ne me point encore accoutumer à cette jolie Abbaye, de l'admirer toujours comme si je ne l'avais jamais vue, et de trouver que vous m'êtes bien obligée de la quitter pour aller à Vichy." The long journey into Brittany had no terrors for her, and she spent even the winter months in perfect enjoyment at Les Rochers, laughing at her friends in Paris who pitied her. Why should she not be happy there? She had the two prime requisites for life in the

country: the love of planting and the love of reading, or, better still, re-reading. She somewhere defends herself against her daughter, who had reproached her for reading the same romances thrice over, with the remark that she reads all her books, serious as well as light, over and over again. That is only possible in the country. I spoke just now of Hazlitt, another country lover. "I hate to read new books," said Hazlitt. "There are twenty or thirty volumes that I have read over and over again, and these are the only ones that I have any desire ever to read at all. When I take up a work that I have read before I know what I have to expect. The satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated. In reading a book which is an old favourite with me (say, the first novel I ever read), I not only have the pleasure of imagination and of a critical relish of the work, but the pleasure of memory added to it. It recalls the same feelings and associations which I had in first reading it, and which I can never have again in any other way." In the country when I open my newspaper and read how "Mr. So-and-So's new novel is in great demand at the libraries," it gives me a possibly mischievous pleasure to turn to Hazlitt's growl: "I hate to read new books."

Perhaps, to a man, the subtlest fascination of Mme. de Sévigné's letters is their *odor di femmina*, their essentially feminine outlook on life and concern with the interests peculiar to women. With what satisfaction, when middle-aged, she notes that she

still preserves her face and her figure! And with what indignation against her son-in-law she sees her daughter's figure spoiled by yet another *grossesse!* When she goes a-visiting she gives her daughter a precise description of her costume: "Voici comme votre mère était habillée, une bonne robe-de-chambre bien chaude, que vous avez refusée, quoique fort jolie; et cette jupe violette, or et argent, que j'appelais sottement un jupon, avec une belle coiffure de toutes cornettes de chambre négligées; j'étais, en vérité, fort bien." And her daughter is begged for like information in return: "Dites-moi un peu de vos habits." When royal disfavour causes the abandonment of a certain kind of feminine head-dress—the "fontange à plate couture"—she writes to tell the Duc de Chaulnes all about it.

And the secret of her style? She thinks it is in letting her pen do what it pleases. "I always begin without knowing where I am going; I don't know whether my letter will be long or short; I write as long as it pleases my pen, which governs everything; I believe that to be a good rule, it suits me, and I shall stick to it." She stuck to it for a lifetime of letter-writing—the last letter in my edition of 1806 is numbered 1,100—without self-consciousness, without any eye to posterity, simply talking with her pen; and posterity is still "reading *all* Mme. de Sévigné" with delight.

SAINTE-BEUVE

New critical sects seem to start up every week. Our young barbarians are all at play with unknown names, especially French names that one lumps together vaguely as "post-war," and stedfastly purposes to leave severely alone. For there are latest fashions in criticism as there are in flapper frocks and displaying, more often than not, the same freedom of *décolletage*. Literature, even critical literature, must accommodate itself, apparently, to the clamorous needs of the ex-Service men. I suppose it will come out all right in the long run and we shall witness a new birth unto critical righteousness. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, when told that a young man of the company would by and by grow amusing, "I can wait." (I read in a Cotswold Guide the other day that a lady who lived to an extreme old age was "a fine example of holy waiting"—delicious phrase!) Meanwhile, give me the "old religion." One of its major prophets was named Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve. He was born in 1804, which was certainly a long time before the war, *the* war, and I daresay our young barbarians regard him as a fossil. And yet his life has only just been added to Hachette's "Grands Ecrivains Français." It is rather a dull life—I mean M. G.

Michaut's book, not Sainte-Beuve's own existence, which had its moments of passionate romance. The world has heard a good deal, perhaps too much, about these moments from other sources, and M. Michaut's graver purpose is to show us the critic at work rather than the man at play. Literary men at work, scribbling like mad, with their books all over the floor, and not even mother allowed to come into the study, may furnish an improving, but scarcely an amusing, spectacle.

And what a worker Sainte-Beuve was! They seem to have been wonderful "swotters" these writers of the 'forties and 'fifties. There was Balzac, who sat up all night at it, and corrected his copy some nineteen times. There was George Sand, who started a fresh novel within half-an-hour of finishing the last. And there was Sainte-Beuve, who shut himself up all the week to write his "Lundi" article for the *Constitutionnel*—6,000 to 8,000 words, for 125 francs. He began by "mugging up" his subject, going through books and documents. Then he roughed out his sketch on little slips. Finally he dictated the full text, expanded from these slips, to his secretary. And all for a modest fiver! He lived this cloistered, poverty-stricken life for years. No wonder he was a rather peevish man.

This peevishness occasionally comes out in his work. He was unfair to Chateaubriand, to Lamartine, to Balzac, to Stendhal, because he knew them in the flesh and had been rubbed the wrong way by

them. But he could write very charmingly about a few people still alive, old gentlemen who had written little poems or theatre *proverbes* before his day, and had survived to be quaint " oddities " of the boulevards in his time ; old gentlemen who had had no great successes to provoke odious comparisons. Their very names are forgotten (and I cannot cite them, for I am writing away from my Sainte-Beuve volumes), but they furnished Sainte-Beuve with some of his most human and kindly portraits. If you had been dead a century or two, he would treat you with splendid generosity. He seems positively to have fallen in love with the salon-keeping ladies of the eighteenth century, Mme. Geoffrin, Mlle. de l'Espinasse, and the rest. He even liked Voltaire's blue-stocking, mathematical friend, Mme. du Châtelet. I happen to possess F. T. Palgrave's copy of Sainte-Beuve's " Lundis," scribbled all over with his annotations. He has devoted many more marks of admiration to the portraits of these ladies than to the papers on the Bossuets, the Massillons, and the other really great names, and I cheerfully cry " Ditto to Mr. Burke." Sainte-Beuve had a feminine strain in him, and was never so much at home as when writing about the ladies.

Is he read now ? If I were writing before the war and the advent of the " flapper " school of criticism, I should say he was read by every one with the slightest pretensions to humane letters. But to-day I have my doubts. Matthew Arnold was saturated

with him, and it was through Arnold that many of us were first led to him, as to so much else of the best; but I suppose the author of "Essays in Criticism" is now only another fossil. Probably even before the war, Sainte-Beuve was superseded by Anatole France and Jules Lemaître. They both had a more lively, taking style than their great predecessor, and a nonchalance, a catholicism of taste, that was not to be expected in Sainte-Beuve's time. Anyhow, we most of us feel to-day that there is a little too much of the biographical element in the "Lundis," and not enough of pure artistic appreciation. It is for this lack that Croce ranks him unhesitatingly below De Sanctis. But the fact remains, that if you are reading not so much for criticism pure and simple, as for the sheer joy of reading, for escaping from the irksomeness of this workaday world into the gossip, the romance, the *va-et-vient* of the past, for enjoying delicate, intimate sensations of the finest things in literature, from Rabelais to Rousseau, from Vauvenargues to Cowper, you will always get what you want in Sainte-Beuve. He was not a perfect character, as you may discover from M. Michaut's book if you did not know it before. He behaved badly to Victor Hugo. The Princess Mathilde thought he behaved badly to the Second Empire. He had (see the Goncourt Diary) a rather crapulous old age. But "let not his frailties be remembered," as Johnson said of Goldsmith, "he was a very great man."

A CORRESPONDENCE

At first sight it seems odd that the English public should have had to wait so long for a translation of the correspondence between George Sand and Gustave Flaubert—one of the most important, because most intimate and most sincerely truthful, records of the literary temperament and the literary *cuisine.* On reflection, it seems even more odd that the English public should get it at all. For the English public rather prides itself on its lack of concern about these questions of literary temperament and *cuisine ;* any curiosity about them it regards as foolishness ; it is content to leave them to the recluses, degenerates, cranks, and other queer fish who seem unaccountably bored by the interests proper to sensible men, such as business, racing, dancing, and howling down (or crying up) Mr. Lloyd George. In a word this book of " George Sand—Gustave Flaubert Letters," translated by Aimée McKenzie, is not for the Philistines. The people who buy " best-sellers," out of pure gregariousness, for the same reason that they wear low-waisted dresses or play golf, because " everybody's doing it," will have no use for a book which must seem to them recondite, pointless, and rather mad. Even the

demi-semi-literary public, which is deuced knowing over "the truth" about Byron, diligently collects the works of the verslibrists, and has dipped (when nobody was looking) into "Ulysses," will turn with repugnance from the stale controversies and confidences of two correspondents in that eminently "Victorian" decade, 1865–1875.

But the odd thing has happened, and here is the translation, remarkably close and good, as far as I have been able to compare it with the original. I suppose it to be an American translation, not that it is disfigured—or adorned—by any "Americanisms," but because it was "undertaken in consequence of a suggestion by Professor Stuart P. Sherman." I may be wrong, but Professor Stuart P. Sherman *sounds* like an American professor, and his references in the (excellent) introduction to "the older Mark Twain" and "the late Barett Wendell" seem to my ear to settle it. The Professor, like everybody else, finds the main interest of the correspondence in the persistence, under an affectionate personal relationship, of a fundamental antagonism of views and beliefs. Certainly; but it was the very antagonism of the views that made the affection possible. If the authors had been both of the same literary school, if they had both simply written to say ditto to one another, not only would the correspondence have languished but they would infallibly have quarrelled. Art is an individual thing, and no artist likes the existence of a "double"; "none

but himself can be his parallel " ; a " parallel " will seem to him an echo of his qualities and a parody of his defects. The art of George Sand and of Flaubert had absolutely nothing in common ; they could easily agree to differ. They could not, in truth, read one another. When George gets " L'Education Sentimentale " from Flaubert, she speaks very nicely about it, but you can see, with half an eye, the effort to be nice, the real underlying dislike. Just the same thing happens when Flaubert gets a book of George's. It could not be otherwise. They were " opposite numbers."

Flaubert lived for literature. It was to him what " dorgs " were to the gentleman in the white hat : " meat, drink, and washing." He preferred it even (as on one occasion he solemnly told his mistress, of all people) to the love of woman. It is amusing to see George Sand, that old campaigner, delicately inquiring into this side of his life, and hinting that a little more love-making might be a salutary relief from his perpetual phrase-making. She, who had assuredly not hesitated to seek that relief in her own life, is evidently puzzled by the anchorite temperament of her friend. She returns again and again to the point, thinking the man must be insincere, that an author has really no business not to be a lover, till poor Flaubert has to remind her that he is fifty and that, even in his young days, he was very little tormented in the way she speaks of. As to that, *ne fait pas ce tour qui veut.* Flaubert was by no means

the type that women naturally take to. He was a self-tormentor.

I pass entire weeks without exchanging a word with a human being ; and at the end of the week it is not possible for me to recall a single day nor any event whatsoever. I see my mother and my niece on Sundays, and that is all. My only company consists of a band of rats in the garret, which make an infernal racket above my head, when the water does not roar or the wind blow. The nights are black as ink and a silence surrounds me comparable to that of the desert. Sensitiveness is increased immeasurably in such a setting. I have palpitations of the heart for nothing. All that results from our charming profession. That is what it means to torment the soul and the body. But perhaps this torment is our proper lot here below.

One would as soon expect a woman to love a mummy as this gloomy, absorbed, literature-ridden recluse.

George Sand lived for life. Life for her meant, until she was fiftyish, lovers ; afterwards, family-love. She had been a passionate *amoureuse*, and was, when Flaubert corresponded with her, a passionate grandmother. To show Flaubert what a fool he is for not "letting himself be dragged away to life for life's sake," she tells him of the great time they are having at Nohant with her son Maurice's marionnette plays. "These plays last till two o'clock in the morning, and we are crazy on coming out of them. We sup till five o'clock. There is a performance twice a week." And, through it all, she kept on turning out novel after novel ; for writing came as easily and as naturally to her as breathing. It is said that when she had written Finis to one

book she would turn without a break to page one of the next. She was still indefatigably and cheerfully writing when Daudet and Zola had already taken the town by storm, and she had outlived her popularity. Very few of her books, I suppose, are read now; but those few, "La Mare au Diable," "La Petite Fadette," "Mauprat," "Consuelo," the world will not willingly let die.

She has the best of this correspondence. Flaubert championed a confused and impossible æsthetic: the "absolute impersonality" of art, meaning not only that the author should not speak in his own person, which *may be* a right principle in certain cases, but also that he should not be discernible behind his work, which is absurd. George Sand's reply is final: "I know that you criticize the intervention of the personal doctrine in literature. Are you right? Isn't it rather a lack of conviction than a principle of æsthetics? One cannot have a philosophy in one's soul without its appearing. . . . I think that your school is not concerned with the substance, and that it dwells too much on the surface. By virtue of making the form, it makes the substance too cheap. It addresses itself to the men of letters. But there are no men of letters, properly speaking. Before everything one is a man." Unfortunately, before everything, Flaubert was not a man but a "mandarin."

ROMANCE FOR THE SEDENTARY

The sedentary man who quits his study chair for a few hours' railway journey has a peculiar sense of romantic adventure and joys not vouchsafed to the regular traveller. If there is a choice of routes to his destination, the preliminary task of looking out a good train in Bradshaw or the A.B.C. is a pleasing prologue to the entertainment. With the regular traveller this choice will, no doubt, be settled by severely practical considerations; this train or that on such-and-such a line is the quickest or has a restaurant-car or leaves you comfortable time on arrival at your journey's end to dress for dinner. Madam, with a housewife's eye to taxi-fares, votes for Euston Station because it is the nearest. But you prefer St. Pancras because it is unknown to you, and because somebody has said that it is opposite the Regent Theatre, which strikes you as an alluring site for a railway terminus to occupy. Incidentally, too, you fancy you have heard that the Midland people always "do you well" in the restaurant car. St. Pancras Station proves to be rather larger than you had supposed, and, struck by its imposing façade, you forget to look for the Regent Theatre.

Was it in *Punch*, the story of the gentleman, well

dined, who demanded a first-class ticket of the booking clerk and to the question "What station?" loftily replied, "What stations have you?" He, too, was a romantic. But it is far better, having taken your ticket for your destination, *not* to know the names of the stations on your way. For any one who learnt his geography at the distant period of my schooldays this is quite easy. I was taught all about Popocatapetl and the Andaman Islands, but not a word of the towns served by the Midland Railway or any other. I used to think that Mr. Arnold Bennett's "Five Towns" were reached by the G.W.R. On the whole, however, I have derived more pleasure than inconvenience from this ignorance. It contributes to the romance of travel, as George Borrow well knew, who is mysteriously vague about localities. With him Salisbury is always "the city of the Spire." And where is "the dingle"? So, as you are whirled in the train past a big town, all red-brick, you wonder whether it is Nottingham or Northampton and look out for the signs of lace or boot making to settle the point. The fun is that it may be neither; and, when the name flashes into view from the platform, it may be something quite unexpected and denoting an entirely different staple industry from either lace or boots. A delicious name caught my eye on the Midland the other day—Chapel-en-le-Frith. A quaint, picturesque, grey stone place; if any one had asked me why it was so named I should have had to give the famous answer

about "the Yorker," what else *could* you call it? And there are distant towns, away from the line, flat against the hillside, and looking as though they were painted on it, as the good Abbé Coignard in "La Rôtisserie" says of a town on the Lyons road. "Parvenus le quatrième jour à Montbard, nous nous arrêtâmes sur une hauteur d'où l'on découvrait toute la ville, dans un petit espace, comme si elle était peinte sur toile par un habile ouvrier, soucieux d'en marquer tous les détails."

That is the fun of looking out of the window. But there is equally good sport for the unaccustomed traveller within. Between people in the train and the same people out of it there is always a subtle difference. The regular travellers may be told at a glance: the provident people who send a porter in advance to put their bags and wraps in the corner seats, the important people "well-known on the line" to whom all the railwaymen touch their caps, who are even ceremoniously greeted by the station-master, and who say testily to the restaurant waiter, "What, John, apple tart again to-day!" There are sociable travellers who are capable of talking for four hours at a stretch, and always on topics of the last triviality. There are travellers who sleep steadily throughout the journey and, by a sort of miracle, are suddenly wide-awake at their proper station. And there are fidgety travellers, who are always looking at their watch and deciding that the train is five minutes late, as usual, at this station.

They differ among themselves, these railway travellers, but they all have a certain air in common, which makes them quite unlike themselves when seen in the street, a conscious air, an air of being members of a secret brotherhood who recognize one another, but are careful to give no sign of recognition.

All this constitutes an amusing experience for a sedentary man. It excites him to a certain exaltation, a certain delight in the fulness of life, in the very strangeness of its minute details, which to the regular traveller are, no doubt, tedious routine. Those who are most aware of the routine are, I suppose, the railway servants. They are, however, in this country, and in my experience, an extraordinarily courteous and obliging set of men. When you think how they must be badgered by the fussy and foolish, who seem even more numerous on trains than off them, you cannot but marvel at their unfailing patience and good nature. Pass for the porters, who have a tip to earn. But the people who are rarely tipped, the ticket collectors, the guards, are just as civil. I don't know what the directors have to say about it, but, speaking as a traveller, I doubt if there is any more efficient, better-behaved body of men than these railway servants. Contrast their behaviour with the scrambling, pushing selfishness of the passengers, when boarding a train. Renan says somewhere that it was only by a miracle that he ever got into a train; his old-fashioned courtesy would never let

him take " le pas " of any other competitor for a seat. With an English guard to look after him he would have been quite safe.

As a crowning touch to the romance of travel, you will take care to read an Oppenheim. I spoke of your exaltation of spirit, and this is just the mood for Mr. Oppenheim's tales of adventure and luxurious living. You will come to the chapter where the young lady with the care-laden eyes and in priceless furs took her seat at a specially reserved table at the Milan, with the distinguished-looking, slightly bald diplomat who discussed with Louis, the *maître d'hôtel*, the question of ortolans after fresh caviar ; you will read (it is one of Mr. Oppenheim's foibles) that " the champagne was excellent " ; and your happiness will be complete.

N OR M

In giving an account of a new play, I find myself rather perversely reluctant to describe the personages by their names. Rather perversely, because it is the obvious, simple thing to do. "John Doe woos Jane, the daughter of Richard Roe, who refuses his consent to the marriage." Instead of which, I probably say, "The hero woos the daughter of the heavy father, who, &c."

My method, I see, has this advantage, that it puts the parties in their dramatic place: "hero" and "heavy father" tell the reader something more than is told by the mere names "John Doe" and "Richard Roe." But I suspect there is something else in it. It gives me a certain detachment. I refrain from pledging myself to belief in the reality of the personages, which naming them would imply. For fictitious people acquire a certain measure of reality simply from bearing names. You know that the names, too, are fictitious, arbitrary, invented by the author for the creatures of his imagination; yet, subconsciously, you are more inclined to accept the imaginary people as real because they bear names like other real people.

It was even so in the nursery. "Once upon a

time there lived a dwarf "—you only half-believed that—" whose name was Rumpelstiltzkin "—and then you couldn't but entirely believe. The name carried with it a conviction of godfathers and godmothers, of verifiable identity and an established place in the social order. By merely naming his characters, then, the dramatist has artfully loaded his dice; and by ignoring the names I see that we play fair.

Further, names have associations, a history, a character to lose or to retrieve. The authors of the Catechism, with their " N or M," were obviously alive to this. Had they given actual names as typical, they would never have heard the last of it. " John," say, would have been too squire-archical, or too democratic, or too class-conscious, or too unpleasant a reminder of your uncle John who got seven years; " Ann " would have recalled your underhousemaid who ran away with the milkman—*some* objection could be raised against any name. What is more, any name selected would have acquired an unfair prestige. Thousands of infants would be " named out of the Catechism " and pride themselves in after life on a peculiar holiness.

Mr. Shandy knew something about this subtle influence of names upon the named. " His opinion in this matter was that there was a strange kind of magic bias, which good or bad names, as he called them, irresistibly impressed upon our character and conduct." And he asked if " your son—your dear

son—your Billy, sir!—you would, for the world, have called Judas." Balzac seems to have shared this view in naming his characters. He is said to have ranged all Paris in search of "good" names. One of the discoveries of which he was inordinately proud was "Z. Marcas." The name, he decided, could only belong to a martyr, the zigzag of the initial denoting a life of torment. Unfortunately the real Marcas was a tailor. "He deserved a better fate!" said Balzac, "but it shall be my business to immortalize him." I read in MM. Cerfberr and Christophe's invaluable "Répertoire de la Comédie Humaine" that Zéphirin Marcas was born at Vitré in 1803, had a leonine head, as an orator equalled Berryer and surpassed Thiers, and died (miserably) in 1838. This work, by the way, is another testimony to the reality-giving power of names; it contains some two thousand entries, mainly of people who never existed save in Balzac's imagination, and reads as true as any other biographical dictionary.

I suppose our novelists and dramatists must consult the Post Office Directory to find a likely name—and then carefully alter it. If they don't, they may soon find themselves in the Law Courts. Unless memory deceives, Sir Arthur Pinero had trouble with a real Mr. Tanqueray and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones with a real Mr. Wichelow or Whichelow, whose name occurs in *Mary Goes First*. Fortunately, the law of libel was not so highly developed (if at all—perhaps some lawyer will say) in Shake-

speare's time, or he would have been badgered by all the real Pages and Fords and Quicklys and Slys. Later dramatists chose an easier way, the way of *descriptive* names—Millamant, Maskwell, Lady Wishfort, Dr. Cantwell, Cutpurse, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy. But this is crude and tends to give an air of allegory instead of reality—like Christian, Mr. Facing-both-ways, and Giant Despair. The only modern analogue to this practice is in farce, where absurd names indicate in advance the absurdity of the personages—the Bottleton-Pottletons (Mr. Zebedee Bottleton-Pottleton, the Lady Anastasia, and the Misses Ahola and Aholiba B.-P.), and so forth. These people reside at Little Pedlington or at Upper Tooting. For place-names no less than personal have their comic associations with the additional advantage that a suburban district cannot bring a libel action.

My complaint against our modern writers of comedy and drama is that, in playing for safety, they take refuge in the insipid, and, in seeking distinction, unduly lengthen the honours-list. Their casts are thickly sprinkled with Horaces and Reginalds and Marmadukes, while peerages and baronetcies, Privy Councillorships, and K.C.B.'s are lavishly distributed among the obviously undeserving classes.

I spoke just now of place-names. Has any one noticed what rich examples of these occur in *The Times* "Hunting" column—sturdily English, ancient and "racy of the soil?" "A fresh fox jumped up,

and, after making a ring, ran through Frome Park, past Higher Chalmington and Charity Bottom, to Stays Folly." "From Long Meadow hounds hunted a fox up to Bordells and on into Whitefield Coppice. From there he ran through Crackley and back again through Bordells to Black Waste, where he turned left-handed through Beanit Spinnies." "The fox then crossed to Goldesborough Big Wood, and eventually was abandoned near Landshaw. The Hunsingore Coverts were drawn blank, and a fox from Hopperton was lost near Allerton Church." I am no more a fox-hunter than Mr. Crummles was a Prussian, and haven't the remotest notion what these statements mean, but I read them regularly with delight, for the sake of the adorable English names. Here fact beats fiction hollow.

THE ART OF LIVING

It is a question whether such books as Mr. Seymour Hicks's "Difficulties" ever reach their right address. The young seldom take oral advice, and to ask them to read it in "cold" print would be a counsel of perfection. Especially our "new young," who are as distinctly a post-war product as the "new poor," and who, I am told, are little given to reading anything at all. Mr. Hicks seems to be aware of this reluctance of theirs, to judge from the exiguity of the library he would tempt them with—Pepys, Boswell, Dickens, and Rupert Brooke—a sound choice, of course, as far as it goes, but hardly going far enough to constitute a liberal education. Will they complete this modest little set with "Difficulties" and ponder it as zealously as the youth of the Renaissance pondered "Il Cortegiano" and the many other books of precepts on the art of living that characterized the close of the fifteenth century? I have my doubts. But let not Mr. Hicks repine. He will have his readers in plenty, but they will be mainly selected from those of maturer years, who, like Gibbon, would not exchange their love of reading for all the wealth of the Indies, and who, in particular, love to read, with detachment, about the

" old, unhappy, far-off things " that recall to them—too late, they will be comforted to think, for any hope of reform—their own misspent youth.

Misspent youth! It seems almost a pleonasm, so thickly strewn with traps for the inexperienced is the entry into adult life. Show me a man who has never got caught in any one of them, and I will show you an intolerable prig. But we need not, I think, be prigs because we have escaped some of those which Mr. Hicks describes with minute particularity and evident gusto. There is the West-end gambling-hell, for instance, where the sirens are, and the free suppers and champagne and cigars. I suppose, because Mr. Hicks does, that youth is tempted into these resorts; but not, I think, ingenuous youth, the sort to whom his book is addressed, only raffish youth, Tom-and-Jerry youth, the " wasters " to whom uttering words of caution is casting pearls before swine. But Mr. Hicks assumes you to be a guileless, " chivalrous young sportsman," and this is how your chivalry will be imposed upon, when you have driven the siren home to her maisonnette in the early hours of the morning :—

With a boldness bred of pity your lips will touch her forehead, two of her well-salted tears will splash heavily on the already watered silk of your dress coat, and a bowed head resting almost imperceptibly against your shirt-front will price your pearl studs. Poor little soul! you think, as an army corps of full-blooded microbes surge uppermost in you. You will wonder what good fairy has turned you into a Jack to slay the giant of her sorrows. Transfixed and irresolute you will suddenly see yourself painted

by Martell as a three-star Galahad, and at the advanced age of twenty-two you will suddenly find that you have been wrong in thinking that there was nothing in life worth living for. It is all too wonderful whispers a far-off voice. . . . There is an exquisite pause, and you are for the jeweller's in the morning, 25 per cent. of the purchase price of your gift being posted to your host of the night before five minutes after you have left the shop.

This is a " racy " passage, and a good example of Mr. Hicks's idiosyncratic style ; but, frankly, I am sceptical about his chivalrous young sportsman. I suggest that the kind of youth that finds itself in these situations has been " asking for it," and won't be saved from it by whole libraries of warning.

Indeed, Mr. Hicks's imaginary youth seems peculiar in his tastes and his luck. He goes racing, and, of course, he is a " mug " at it. He is a would-be collector of curios and antiques—at eighteen. In due course he is blackmailed. I do not presume to question the value of the advice he will get from this book on such subjects ; what I doubt is whether he is really an average young man. I like reading about all these pitfalls, they have the true romantic touch ; but it is with a certain ruefulness at the thought of what I have missed. Here were all these dangerous adventures in life, and they passed me by ! I look in vain for the marks of the teardrops on the already watered but never re-watered silk of my dress coat. I yearn for the antiques I never dreamt of collecting in my teens. What a dull, insipid youth I must have had, without knowing it ! And yet I cannot resist the suspicion that it was an

average kind of youth, and that most of the misadventures Mr. Hicks so luridly paints are to my contemporaries what they are to me—fairy tales. I hope nobody will accuse me of Pharisaism. I feel like M. Bergeret, who rejoiced in the distinction of not being decorated with the Legion of Honour, but would have preferred to have been offered it and to have refused. Mr. Hicks professes to address the youthful man of the world. It is galling, in advanced years, to know that one is not a man of the world, and never was.

But if there *are* ingenuous and chivalrous young sportsmen who are likely to be tempted by the snares Mr. Hicks depicts with so loving a brush, by all means let them read " Difficulties " and perpend. Incidentally they will learn how to clean their teeth, purge and live cleanly like gentlemen. For the author ranges over a wide field, from domestic hygiene to religion, with a fearless pen that occasionally knocks syntax endways. Thus to write " your more profound and austere teacher, *whom* you have made up your mind is incapable, &c.," and " the next most important thing to yourself *are* the companions you gather round you " is to add needlessly to the difficulties of youth. . . . But what an odd book, always so earnest, often so solemn, sometimes so sentimental, to have come from one of the acknowledged wits of our time, *bon enfant*, a perpetual marvel of careless high spirits in the company of his friends ! It is as though Mercutio had suddenly

transformed himself into the Melancholy Jaques—or Polonius. You never can tell. The wit, the jester, describes himself as " a poor, sad fellow, who spends his time smiling to hide his tears." If so, it is one of the happiest achievements in *camouflage* that we know.

THROUGH FRENCH EYES

They say that if you want to see the landscape æsthetically, as a picture, you should bend down and look at it between your legs. They may be right, but the process brings me only a sensation of blood to the head. We can all, however, accept the general principle, the advantage of seeing the familiar through strange eyes. Foreigners perceive aspects of our native land which we don't, just as, when we go abroad, we have thrilling glimpses of " effects " in Rome or Venice or Taormina that leave the local population quite cold. A Frenchman in England sees his own England, not ours, and gets his own peculiar pleasure (if it isn't displeasure) out of it. I once spent a lazy summer afternoon hour with Paul Hervieu, in New College gardens, and he called Oxford the Venice of the North, which seemed to me a singularly bad comparison. Henry James, in one of his letters, reports Alphonse Daudet saying, after looking at nothing in particular, " Ah, si vous saviez comme ces petits coins d'Angleterre m'amusent ! " We who live in the little corners are not amused by them or find them amusing for different reasons. I can accept all M. Bourget's " Sensations d'Italie " and see Apulia or Tuscany eye to eye with

him, but when he records his impressions of Oxford or the Isle of Wight he shows me something I could never have seen for myself, and even now hardly believe in. So it is with Stendhal. His "Promenades dans Rome" I can swallow whole, and have found it, even in the Rome of to-day, a most companionable book; but his vision of London and his experiences there (a century ago or more) leave me again incredulous.

But these authors belong now to the dark ages—to the strange period when Victor Hugo presented Tom-Tim-Jack as a plausible English name—and to-day there are French writers who appear to be thoroughly at home among us and to know England "like their pocket." And yet, even with these knowing ones, England seems to assume an unreal, exotic air. I take up a book published by the Nouvelle Revue Française—"Tendres Stocks," by Paul Morand—which is a triad of short stories or studies encircling three remarkable young ladies, and I find it crammed with the intimate topography, not to mention the manners and customs, of Oxford and London. Piecing the autobiographical fragments together, you learn that the author was at an English school (where he had to do battle for the national French nightgown against his pyjama'd school-fellows), was in England at the outbreak of war, went to the front, and returned to become an Oxford undergraduate (the indications point to Magdalen). He shows a peculiarly intimate know-

ledge of Oxford—the after-war Oxford, serious, laborious, that has displaced the pre-war Oxford with its Clarendon dances and its daily Clicquot (but in what college was *that?*), which in its turn displaced the Oxford of the early Georges, when the students ruined themselves in "turn-outs" and kept mistresses. He knows Mesopotamia, and Banbury Road, which he has learnt to call "Banbury" —as full, he says, of Wordsworth Houses and Keats Lodges as of nursemaids. He even knows that "town" come out on the river in the summer and assume the air of "gown," careful about feathering their oars and keeping the right side of the river, and calling one another "Sir." All this is simply prodigious in a Frenchman; you see how far you have got from the Venice-of-the-North generation!

But Oxford, after all, is (be it said with all reverence) a small place, and its anfractuosities, as Johnson would have called them, are soon penetrated. London is quite another thing. There are as many million Londons as there are Londoners. Many of us love it for the comparative ease with which you can live out of it and can avoid knowing more of it than your own particular little corner. And what is called London "life" (I mean the sort of life depicted in the illustrated papers and on the films and in agoramaniac plays and on the posters and in the "novel of the season") is for many of us a sheer nuisance and often only a rhetorical expression. Fortunately, there is enough of London to go round

and to suit all tastes, and for my part I like even those parts of London that I have no intention of exploring, when Mr. E. V. Lucas writes about them. M. Morand seems to know almost as much of London as Mr. Lucas and some Bohemian sides of it, I conjecture, even better. He says it is a town that never quite satisfies you, but that spoils all the others for you. He has wandered over it from Ebury Street to the confines of Epping Forest, from Upper Tooting to the route of Motor-bus No. 19, which (he asserts) takes you to Islington. He describes to me in detail a London which I only know vaguely by hearsay and revels familiarly in haunts which I have never had the temerity to approach. One of his young ladies inhabits an old court-house disused since the reign of George IV. (it would seem to be Battersea way); another a house once the house of Lord Byron. He dines and dances at Murray's. Or he feeds at Old Shepherd's in Glasshouse Street, which he likes for its massive tables, low ceiling, toasting fork, and *buffet froid* decked with jonquils in ginger-beer bottles. In the next compartment he can see "la calvitie cossue de Sargent et la tignasse de Roger Fry." *Is* there such a place? He sups with Montjoye, or rather Aronsohn ("an old Norman family," says Daniel), who is private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and has Adam-style rooms in the Albany, with black satin arm-chairs painted by Couder. *Is* there such a person? Perhaps M. Morand is intentionally mystifying us.

And my " perhaps " only shows how easy it is for a Londoner not to know his London, not to be able to discriminate between fact and fiction about it. In any case, M. Morand obviously did not invent Ebury Street and Bus No. 19. He tempts me to go and inspect both—but perhaps they would be disappointing, without the glamour of youth. He is very young, M. Morand, and the rackety existence he appears to have enjoyed in London would be far too uncomfortable for an old fogey.

AT THE ZOO

Not every visitor to the Zoo knows the insect house. Take a sharp turn to the left after passing through the tunnel beyond the bandstand, go up a side-path, and there you are. If you have enough of the child left in you to be fond of silk-worms you will find your old pets there ; also minute submarine (or at any rate, subaqueous) things that it will take you a long time to find out, even through the magnifying glass let into the side of the tank. But the insect house has other occupants besides insects : small hairy quadrupeds, for the most part with prehensile tails. These range from monkeys, segregated apparently from those of the monkey house proper on account of their superior wisdom and refinement, to the honey-bear, a delightfully gentle little plantigrade, whom only expert zoologists would recognize for a bear, and who will nestle in your arms and, as a mark of special favour, let you hang it by its tail.

One day I noticed a new arrival here of a very different sort. He occupied a box in the far corner of a cage filled with a whole tribe of monkeys. Evidently they knew not what to make of their new chum, and, when he presently shuffled forth,

they hastily sought safety on a pole overhead, chattering loudly. He ignored them absolutely. No wonder the monkeys were puzzled! At first sight you took him for a tortoise, but then you saw that it was not the usual carapace on his back, but a suit of corrugated armour, with cross-seams or divisions showing the orange-tawny flesh. Give him a spear and he might be a medieval Japanese warrior—or a cigar, and he becomes the familiar figure that advertises pneumatic tires. Besides, he was far too lively for a tortoise. His keen, attenuated profile reminded you of M. Bergson's. He seemed, in fact, highly intelligent—not with the base cunning of the monkeys—mere worldly wisdom and "knowingness"—but with the deep, inward contemplation and reflection of the philosopher. He bore a beautiful and antique Spanish name and there was, indeed, something of *hidalguia* in his port, so that the monkeys, bustling and noisy, seemed hopelessly vulgar by comparison. One of them, probably a super-monkey, his sense of humour getting the better of his fear, made a long arm as the visitor passed under him and lightly scratched the armoured back. The visitor took no notice. A philosopher, contemplating the absolute or thinking out the nature of the four-dimensional continuum, could not notice monkey-tricks. Besides, there was the pride of *sangre azul*. Was he not an armadillo?

But the super-monkey made another dive and this time touched him between the joints of his

armour. He felt it and retreated to his box, which he should not have left, for he had a claustral air, and solitude became him. "Why," he put to himself the old question of all the philosophers, "why am I here? An armadillo among the monkeys is like the lady amid the rabble rout of *Comus*. The mixture of *genres* is not only a literary mistake; it is a blunder in life. These creatures are broad farce, while I am the intellectual drama. They are fit only for the pencil of Max Beerbohm or Tom Webster; I am a subject for a Sargent or an Augustus John. To put me here, in a wilderness of monkeys, is bad æsthetics. They tell me the Curator of these gardens is a distinguished man of science, and that, perhaps, explains it, for science and æsthetic taste seldom go together. I ask you—just look at the banality of these cages, all alike; look at the impossible colour-scheme; look at these abominable 'rustic' poles! Where is Lutyens?"

The armadillo closed his eyes in meditation, and the monkeys, thinking him asleep, grew bolder and gathered round him in a semi-circle. They discussed him among themselves, and congratulated one another on being unlike him. "I am the man in the street, the plain man, Sir," said the supermonkey, "and cannot abide these philosophers, especially when they are foreigners, and this fellow has a beastly outlandish name. Philosophy has no frontiers? Stuff and nonsense! Besides, he burrows, he can't crack nuts, he can't hang by his tail,

and his philosophy, therefore, stands self-condemned, a sham philosophy, a mere tangle of sophistries." And he threw a nut at the pseudo-philosopher.

But the armadillo never budged; the nut only changed the current of his thoughts. "After all," he said to himself, "there is something in incongruity, as our younger artists know. It is one of the charms of these gardens, which bring together beasts, fowls, and insects from all quarters of the earth—hot and cold, forest and river, sea and shore—and put them in grotesque juxtaposition. The mere medley is amusing. And evidently, at this moment, my association with these wretched monkeys is amusing that group of schoolchildren. Let me not, then, repine. It is something to have contributed to the public stock of harmless pleasure. When Einstein explained the theory of relativity to a London audience, most of them were wholly ignorant of German; but they were pleased to look at him, to note what sort of coat he wore, and to speculate on his Palestinian origin. Thus may new world-ideas penetrate the masses. I am in good company, and am content to let *my* coat divert the groundlings." And another nut from the super-monkey caught him in the abdomen.

Regardless, he went on: "But I see there is one thing these gardens really lack. The Curator should keep on the premises a Poet-Fabulist. 'The Armadillo and the Monkeys: a Fable'—the very title makes your mouth water. Only a La Fontaine

could do full justice to it. We cannot have him, to be sure, but will not all these queerly assorted cage-fuls tempt the genius of Mr. John Masefield or Mr. Ezra Pound, or one of the young poets fresh from the trenches, those nests of singing-birds ? But why wait ? Hang it ! I'll have a shot at it myself."

And, under a dense volley of nuts from the monkeys, which glanced unheeded off his armour, the armadillo shuffled forward to borrow pencil and paper from the Keeper.

AN HOTEL REVOLUTION

It was after dinner in the Lounge and the world seemed at rest or, even to the rare few who knew more about that matter than Mrs. Shandy, revolving round the sun with its accustomed regularity. The old gentleman whom nobody would speak to because of the vulgar diamond in his shirt front slumbered and as usual, so at least signed to one another those among his neighbours who had the sternest sense of social exclusiveness, audibly snored. The lift-boy, professionally unoccupied, was teasing the hotel cat. A group of youngsters, huddled together on the best settee, were noisy over a parlour-game, which consisted in establishing rival lists of " famous authors " whose names began with D. Every list proved to have Dell, but one provoked something like awe with Dante. The orchestra—three young ladies who intercalated long bouts of woolwork between their brief attacks on violin, 'cello, and piano—once more started that selection from the *Reine de Saba* of which we had all got a little tired. Our supposed American sisters, however, fell into their usual pose of simply adoring Saint-Saëns. Supposed, because nobody exactly knew if they were Americans or even sisters. It was mere conjecture—an exercise for

which hotel life offers lavish opportunity. The rest of us sipped our coffee with an air of luxurious enjoyment worthy of a far choicer berry, freshly roasted and ground. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "the system of life must be carried on." We were carrying on the system of life. Nor were we more conscious of any impending, to say nothing of any seismic, change than was the *ancien régime* of the French Revolution.

Then, as some Victorian novelists are reported by the younger Georgians to have been fond of saying, a strange thing happened. A young girl with bobbed hair, known to her intimates as a connoisseur in peppermint fondants, and to all as the heroine of the tennis courts, suddenly, as the American sisters, if they were real Americans, might have put it, got busy. She brandished a blank sheet of paper and a pencil, at once bashfully and defiantly. She approached us, and in a stage-whisper (for the *Reine de Saba* was still going *fff*) announced her mission. Despite her bobbed hair, she proved to be the Théroigne de Méricourt of the new Revolution. She had bearded the terrible manager in his den—a clean-shaven man, in fact, and of a signal amenity—and suggested an hotel dance!

Now the startling enormity of this suggestion may not be at once apparent to the reader. To appreciate it you had to be an inmate of that hotel. It was—or, in the light of what follows, it is better to say it hitherto had been—*the* one non-dancing hotel of the

place. The other hotels, notably inferior, if on that account alone, danced. They even " featured ' their dances, along with fishing and shooting and electric light throughout, in their ABC advertisements. At the Town Hall the vulgar danced " like mad." But this hotel, *the* hotel, stood proudly aloof, like the morose Stranger at the ball in the burlesque of Kotzebue, who sang

> Happy villagers, dance away,
> *Fits may follow,* but dance away!

It seemed, however, that the manager had not said " fits may follow " to Théroigne de Méricourt. He had pleaded the sacred custom of the hotel, and the dauntless heroine had countered with " pre-war " for the custom. Then the floor of the Lounge, the only available place, was of stone. " A little French chalk," he was answered, " will put that right." But what about ancient and esteemed clients of the hotel ? Some of them will be sure to object. " You leave that to me," said Théroigne. And he did. Hence the paper and pencil. " If you *don't* object, will you please sign your name." You hardly knew if you were being threatened or seduced. There was an artful appeal to the common experience : in this awful weather the hotel was *so* dull. No tennis. Only horrid bridge. Nobody could think of any more " famous authors." Nothing, in short, for the young generation to do. And, said the damsel, with an air of finality, " anything's better than nothing." A Buddhist might have

disputed that point, but there were no Buddhists in the hotel, and the very next night the dance (if we may use an expression banned by the great Delane) took place.

It was a great dance, and reminded some of us of another, which happened a century ago and more at the Crown, when Mr. Knightley's dancing proved to be just what Emma had believed it—extremely good—and Harriet Smith bounded higher than ever and flew down the middle. Not that there was any high bounding or flying down the middle at our hotel. Contemporary dancing does not admit of these violent delights. But our dance had the same effect as that at the Crown: a general transvaluation. Just as on the earlier occasion Mr. Elton was revealed in his true colours and Mr. Knightley and Emma found that their mutual feelings were not at all those of brother and sister, so here the old gentleman with the vulgar diamond stud became a universal favourite for his obliging offices with sandwiches and ices, and a young one who never dressed for dinner and was consequently branded by general disesteem suddenly shone forth as the most expert of fox-trotters from the Embassy Club. Another youth, who had affronted the whole smoking room by a laxity of opinion amounting to Bolshevism, proved the most straitly conscientious of dancers, measuring each step, like some philosopher of Laputa, as though with mathematical instruments of precision. In the small hours a gentleman of the company, as Boswell

would put it, obliged at the piano in order that the three ladies of the orchestra might have their turn on the floor, where, before all was over, they were joined by the *caissière* from the manager's office and the head waiter from the dining room. In short, we were able to add to Théroigne's profound gnome, " Anything's better than nothing," another, " You never can tell."

Next morning, and for all I know ever afterwards, it was quite another hotel. All our values were altered. Ancient and esteemed clients were abashed and ceased to monopolize the best garden chairs in the pavilion. Trailing clouds of glory still hung about the head waiter and the lady cashier. The diamond stud was forgiven. A paper in the hall announced that " the Lounge would be reserved after dinner on Tuesdays and Fridays for dancing until further notice." There is even talk of a Carnival.

LONDON MUSEUM GHOSTS

They have changed the name, I believe, but it will always be Stafford House for those who remember it in the days, by no means distant, when it offered to all classes of society—from crowned heads and the biggest " swells " in Europe and the States down to the humble " littery gent "—a splendid hospitality. It was a house for show, stars and garters and polychromatic crowds, and so, even then, a kind of museum, where the " collections " were constantly changing. It is the London Museum now, with exhibits of things instead of people, and with something of the melancholy—the *lacrimæ rerum*—that one is vaguely conscious of, confronted by glass cases filled with rigid rows of what were once domestic treasures, *bibelots* of dead women, trifles scattered at random about forgotten homes. For those who think of it as Stafford House there is the added melancholy of reminiscence.

How strange to enter by a turnstile, with a man in uniform handing you a catalogue, where formerly you were received by a butler, and a butler who was the *beau idéal* of his race. At this time of day (and at his) it must be supremely difficult to do what this butler did, preserve the judicious mean. The *Punch*

drawings of George du Maurier and the modern theatre between them have made of the butler the grossest of caricatures. He rivals Mr. Turveydrop in deportment and Machiavelli in subtlety. Or else he is romanticized, and made by Mr. Shaw the father of the hero or by the " crook " dramatist the most callous of murderers. A butler in actual life who has seen all these grotesque travesties (and the butler at Stafford House could hardly have failed to do that) must be hard put to it to avoid self-consciousness, not to say self-disesteem. I remember a piece of Meilhac and Halévy in which a South American *rastaquouère* in Paris warns his daughter they must be on their best behaviour, because " l'opéra-bouffe nous guette." So one conceives that a butler with his eye on the modern stage must be disconcerted by the way that stage has its eye on *him*. He has to live down, so to speak, a false reputation. That this butler beautifully did—so far at any rate as the casual guest could see. He was not a bit like anything on the stage or in *Punch*. He was far too well-bred to be either pompous or obtrusively discreet. He had a manner, of course—or why should I remember him?—but never a mannerism. Faintly, perhaps, but only faintly, he suggested an earlier epoch, the time of Melbourne and Palmerston. Mr. Lytton Strachey might have fancied him. But his chief charm in my eyes, I go back to that, was that he represented the triumph of fact over fiction. When-

ever I saw him I thought how blundering in its methods is the stage, how crude, how blind to the fine shades !

And that great double staircase, whereon you are now prosaically bidden by a notice-board to keep to the right, what brilliant crowds surged up it to pay homage to the gracious lady on the landing ! Having accomplished this ceremony, the knowing ones used to perch in the gallery above and look down on the procession. It was like a scene out of " The Young Duke " and needed the pen of Disraeli at his most Corinthian to do justice to it. In one of the big saloons—" saloon " is a great Disraelian word—you might find the latest opera star singing, or a couple of Apache dancers from the Moulin Rouge, or a gentleman from the " halls " in " immaculate " evening dress whistling for all he was worth. Strange as it may seem to the new generation, London could amuse itself, even before the war.

The drawback of a great house, built and generously used for show, is (I suppose) that it is not the most comfortable of houses to live in. I fancy, at any rate, that some of the inmates of Stafford House found it a little too big for their liking, and were somewhat at a loss to create " cosy corners." If any were created, it must have been on the Green Park side, somewhere about the spot where you are now privileged to contemplate the death mask of Oliver Cromwell. Hard by you have the advantage of perusing various bills of mortality and broadsides

relating to the Great Plague. Ugh! It gives me a cold shiver down my back.

In the long drawing-room on the E. side (where the Moulin Rouge people danced and the music-hall gentleman whistled) there is now what is to my mind the *clou* of the present show—a series of costumes from 1600 to 1860. This rivals, perhaps exceeds, in interest the show of costumes, mainly Revolutionary, at the Musée Carnavalet in Mme. de Sévigné's old Paris house. They are, of course, the real thing, costumes actually worn, and one perceives, as one does from the armour at the Tower, that our ancestors were by no means gigantic. There is Oliver Goldsmith's crimson velvet suit, which he got from his tailor, John Filby—a most magnificent garment even for a man who had a notorious passion for fine clothes. If our young post-war poet-novelists could only dress like that now, what a chance they would afford for Max's pencil! One thing is certain, Goldsmith couldn't have *written* in these clothes. Every scribbler knows that the only possible clothes for the desk are the oldest, preferably those with a sleeve that you can use for a pen-wiper. Indeed, I have heard of a distinguished leader-writer who gradually throws off his clothes in the heat of composition, and by the time he has reached his final epigram is reduced to shirt and trousers. And yet Buffon is said to have carefully dressed in Court suit and lace ruffles before sitting down to his morning's work. It sounds incredible.

On the ground floor, where in happier days they used to dine and hold their smaller parties, you are now regaled with skulls of Ancient Britons, animal bones of the Early Stone Age, and weapons of the Cave Period. To my inexpert eye one skull is very much like another, and one axe-head like another axe-head. These are the things one expects in museums, and no doubt they are of the highest antiquarian interest. But they don't appeal to me, a mere ignoramus and as a matter of fact I would give them all for a certain string quartet I once listened to in the room they now grimly adorn.

THE COMPLETE AMORIST

Some one, I think it was Remy de Gourmont, said that any book about love ought to have prefixed to it one of those old symbolical prints wherein the patient saint delicately holds out his heart at the tips of his fingers. There is no such frontispiece to Mr. Harold Child's "Love and Unlove," and one must not assume that in the book he is either holding out his heart with his finger tips or wearing it upon his sleeve. And yet there is an evident sincerity in it, a tone of conviction, a lively faith, which are the sure signs of a genuine experience. Indeed, a book about love by one who had never felt it would be about as valuable as a Post Office Directory where all the addresses were false. But its value will lie rather in suggestion than in persuasion or demonstration. For no two experiences coincide—no, not even the experiences of any actual pair of lovers. Hence, it is a subject on which it is useless to advise. But it is a topic, like that other one which Sir Robert Walpole chose for dinner-table conversation, in which all can join.

It is odd that there are so few good books about love "in the aibstrack." Stendhal's "De l'Amour" —apart from his theory of "crystallization" (which,

I believe, he borrowed from somebody else)—is mere anecdotage. Bourget's "Physiologie de l'amour moderne" is largely a veiled *apologia* for his novels. I am speaking of direct writing about it. Indirectly, of course, it furnishes most of the stuff of poetry, romance, and the drama. So excessive is the amount of this indirect contribution that it exasperates many worthy people, who cry aloud for a play without "sex," a novel that shall not be a love-story. One of the reasons for this indirect treatment is the fear of that very frontispiece I spoke of. People do not like even to seem to be giving themselves away; so they ascribe their dreams and adventures and misadventures of love to fictitious personages. We should not have had Amelia Booth if it had not been for the first Mrs. Henry Fielding. Another reason for reticence is a certain delicacy. Mr. Child thinks this a false shame. It is a survival of the old enemy, Puritanism. "Our shame," he says, "has become so tangled up in our lives that it is all but impossible to separate the threads and examine them. . . . Shame pervades our literary and dramatic criticism; it affects our clothes, our education, our domestic arrangements." (Our clothes! I should have thought recent feminine fashions had freed themselves from this reproach). But is it always shame? You may be reticent, surely, for other reasons than that; you may think some truths too good to be told, only to be spoiled by telling.

Let me hasten to add that Mr. Child's treatment of his subject is delicacy itself. He feels so keenly and so deeply the joy of loving, the human need for a perfect love, that he must impart his views and his ideals about it. I say his ideals, because he is a frank idealist; he believes, for instance, in happiness. It must be positive happiness, a form of energy, not the mere negative happiness of "comfort." Adventures, he would say with Disraeli, are to the adventurous. For two pins he would add, with Nietzsche, "live dangerously." But we are half-hearted adventurers, and make a failure of love from lack of effort, perseverance, and imagination. Love is an art, which men have to "learn." Well, in one sense we can all agree to that; we all learn by experience, not only how to love but how to live. But no collection of precepts will enable any one to become the perfect lover. Indeed, many people will hold that the lover, like the poet, is born not made.

Anyhow, Mr. Child pleads for a full recognition of both sides of love, the carnal and the spiritual; we are to be unashamed of the one and untiring in the development of the other. The refinement of passion, which passes, into durable affection: that is his main theme. It is a very old one, as old, no doubt, as Adam and Eve, and it is not easy to be new about it. Mr. Child says the thing is an art, and we should take it up as serious artists. Now the treatment of love as art is as old as Ovid, if not older, but Mr.

Child takes art in the newest sense, the sense of self-expression.

> We all need an art—that is to say, a form of self-expression which is inexhaustible ; an aim which is always within reach and can never be achieved ; a work which we do for no reward except the activity of doing it. Among the thousands of people who have written poems and painted pictures, and made music, and played games, there have been, in the history of the world, a few who were true artists. And they, I can imagine, might be exceptions from the rule. But the rule for each and all of us ordinary human beings is that the mother-art is that of love, or friendship. It is the art of self-expression by the constant and ever-new adventure of continually readjusting our growing selves to the growing selves of those whom we love. It is the only aim that can never turn to dust and ashes in our mouths.

And so life *à deux* is to be a perpetual consciousness of love, a long adventure in varying expression, a life-long courtship. I said that Mr. Child was an idealist.

He has some good things to say about friendship, as distinct from love, between man and woman. He thinks no friendship is so satisfying, so inspiring and amusing. The subtle difference of sex is the very salt of it. With physical repulsion there cannot be friendship ; however cleverly a woman may talk, she will bore you if you dislike her nose. Such friendships, however, are, you may think, for the elect. This kind cometh not out but with prayer and fasting.

And " Platonic " love ? I fancy Mr. Child has no great belief in it. Apart from friendship, he is all

for normal, bi-lateral love, spirit *and* sense. The author of "Tom Jones," no bad judge, thought that women *might* sometimes be Platonists, but was not quite sure. "That refined degree," he says, "of Platonic affection, which is absolutely detached from the flesh, and is, indeed, entirely and purely spiritual, is a gift confined to the female part of the creation; many of whom I have heard declare (and, doubtless, with great truth) that they would, with the utmost readiness, resign a lover to a rival when such resignation was proved to be necessary for the temporal interest of such lover. Hence, therefore, I conclude that this affection is in nature, though I cannot pretend to say I have ever seen an instance of it."

There is a strange instance of it, in the other sex, in a novel of Stendahl's, "Armance," which few people, I suspect, outside the straitest sect of Stendhalians, have read. I have not, for one; but I have read M. André Gide's preface to the novel, recently published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française.* It seems that the hero, Octave, is violently in love with the fair Armance. But there is an obstacle to their union, and he can never be got to say what it is. Twice he screws himself up to the revelation of his secret. The first time, his courage fails him, and he invents a fictitious secret, that in his youth he had a fit of kleptomania. The second time, he makes the revelation by letter—but the letter never reaches Armance. Stendahl himself never lets the cat out of the bag in the book itself, though he did

in a letter to Prosper Mérimée. The reader must be left to guess it—if he can. I know, but, like Herodotus, won't tell. The interesting question, it strikes me, is what would Armance have done if she had got the letter ?

CORINTHIANISM

Are millionaires given to plagiarism? We are all expected nowadays to interest ourselves in millionaires and their habits, and my question is no idle one; an authoritative answer to it would augment the public stock of harmless pleasure. It occurred to me when I read in the literary page of *The Times* the other day that "a great millionaire not long ago observed 'it is easy to make money but difficult to keep it.'" Not long ago? Then he must have been a modern, presumably a contemporary, millionaire. But I felt sure that I had read the millionaire's valuable observation in some book or other that was certainly too old to be of contemporary authorship. I searched and searched, and at last I came upon it. It is in "Henrietta Temple," which dates as far back as 1837. Ferdinand Armine is conversing with his new friend and benefactor, Mr. Bond Sharpe:—

"It is a great thing to make a fortune," said Ferdinand. "Very great," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "There is only one thing greater, and that is, to keep it when made." Ferdinand smiled. "Many men make fortunes; few can keep them," said Mr. Bond Sharpe, "Money is power, and rare are the heads that can withstand the possession of great power."

Later in the conversation Mr. Bond Sharpe said, "Am I to be branded because I have made half a million by a good book?" Mr. Bond Sharpe, you will already have guessed, was a bookmaker, not an author. Also you perceive that he was only a demi-millionaire. But evidently the "great millionaire" of "not long ago" did not disdain to borrow from him.

If the great one, whoever he was, were to reply that he was only giving terse expression to the common millionaire experience and that he had never read "Henrietta Temple," I should make bold to tell him that, with all his millions, he had missed one of the delights of life. "Henrietta Temple" is a delicious book. So are nearly all the earlier novels of Disraeli, written before he ruined his literary style by going into politics. They are delicious and Corinthian, beautifully harmonizing with the costume and the architecture and the *cuisine* and the cellar of their day. "Henrietta Temple" is the choicest of them, to my taste, just because it is exquisitely what its author called it, "a love story." Its title-page bears this quotation from "Don Quixote": "Quoth Sancho, read it out by all means; for I mightily delight in hearing of Love Stories." I agree with Sancho.

The fashion just now is the other way. Our novelists have of late discovered what the world had already suspected, that love is not altogether unconnected with sex, and they have perhaps made a

little too much of their belated discovery. Hence a certain reaction against the so-called sex-novel. And, as a sex story is certainly a kind of love story, many people tend to confuse the greater with the less, and to protest against love stories of any kind. Even Mr. Maurice Hewlett, himself *à ses heures* a writer of charming love stories, seems to me in some recent remarks not clearly to distinguish between the two kinds. He instances the famous love stories of "Daphnis and Chloe" and "Manon Lescaut" among sex stories—a strange confusion, surely. He observes that there is no love in the Odyssey and none in "Robinson Crusoe," as evidence apparently that it is possible to have good stories without love, which nobody, I imagine, was ever so foolish as to deny. We may still agree with Sancho Panza.

I must be allowed to quote once again Pascal's plural: the passions of love. There is a passion of love which, however closely it may be traced to physical origins, can be analysed by the novelist without express reference to them; I mean the passion of love as an obsession, a kind of madness. It may be violent or it may be tender, and though it is quite true, as Mr. Hewlett remarks, that there is no "sex" in Jane Austen, there is tenderness raised to the pitch of passion in the author of "Persuasion." In "Henrietta Temple" this tender passion becomes even paroxysmal. Ferdinand Armine positively foams at the mouth. But that is only a characteristic touch of Disraeli's Corin-

thianism. It belongs to the romantic period when men shed tears and women swooned on the slightest provocation. Apart from a few such details of "date," the book is a genuine and powerful study of love as it affects highly wrought temperaments, and if this does not appeal to us, then we must declare "Adolphe" a dull novel and *Romeo and Juliet* an absurd play.

The love story is told, of course, in flamboyantly Corinthian language—language which was proper to the moment and to the writer.

> Will she indeed be here? Will Henrietta Temple indeed come to visit him? Will that consummate being before whom, but a few days back, he stood entranced; to whose mind the very idea of his existence had not then even occurred; will she be here anon to visit him? to visit her beloved? What has he done to be so happy? What fairy has touched him and his dark fortunes with her wand? What talisman does he grasp to call up such bright adventures of existence? He does not err. He is an enchanted being; a spell indeed pervades his frame; he moves in truth in a world of marvels and miracles. For what fairy has a wand like love, what talisman can achieve the deeds of passion?

A queer outlandish lingo, it seems now, as queer as the high rolled collars and gorgeous velvet waistcoats of its time. But fashions in language are, to say the least, as interesting as fashions in clothes. But the point is, that, though he does talk of "consummate beings," Disraeli contrives to bring off the essential thing—he puts before you the lover's ecstasy.

Not that a love story need be all love. There are some brilliant sketches of a bygone society in

"Henrietta Temple"—old Lady Bellair (evidently from the life, and better than any of Thackeray's dowagers), the charming Count Mirabel (D'Orsay, of course), Mr. Bond Sharpe already mentioned (who, I suppose, was Crockford), the tutor Glastonbury, and the little waiter at the sponging-house who consoled the hero with "A nob was never nabbed for the sum you are, Sir, and ever went to the wall." Disraeli had the same fondness as Balzac for writing about "nobs," with the advantage, which Balzac had not, of living with his subjects. Thus Disraeli's novels are documents as well as delights. It is a perpetual marvel to me that so few people of this generation seem to read them. Well, *non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.*

FLAMBOYANCY

Reading, or rather tasting and sipping and rolling over on the tongue, Mr. Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria," from its opening chapter on the disreputable Georgian uncles to the apotheosis of the supremely reputable niece at the Diamond Jubilee, I have been reminded of the two great categories into which the French Romanticists of the 'thirties divided mankind. They said we were all either *flamboyant* or *drab*. It is not quite the same dichotomy as the vulgar "twopence coloured" and "penny plain," but there is a certain analogy. To take cardinal examples. Don Quixote was flamboyant and Sancho Panza drab. "Flamboyant," according to that indispensable work the Concise Oxford Dictionary, is "marked by wavy flamelike lines (of French 15th and 16th century architecture); floridly decorated; gorgeously coloured." This hardly covers the literary signification of the word, which has in it a flavour of "romantic" (as opposed to "classic"), of warm exuberance in contrast with chill restraint.

The sonnets of Shakespeare are as flamboyant as you please; Milton's and Wordsworth's are undeniably drab. Against the flamboyancy of Dickens

and Swinburne and Browning you can set the drabness of Trollope and George Eliot and Mr. Bridges. Rawdon Crawley was as flamboyant as Pitt Crawley was drab. All the world in the war (except the neutrals) was flamboyant; it is going through a phase now wherein the flamboyants are at grips with the drabs—and the devil (by the way a conspicuous flamboyant) take the hindmost!

To me the chief interest of Mr. Strachey's book is not its biography of Queen Victoria, fascinating (and amusing) reading as that is, but its record of the gradual transference of English society from the category "flamboyant" to the category "drab." You begin with the first set in full swing. The Prince Regent and the other wicked uncles, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Melbourne, were all genuine flamboyants. When the Prince left off stays he became superfluously flamboyant. "Prinny has let loose his belly, which now reaches his knees," is Mr. Strachey's delicious foot-note from Creevey. And take the Duke of Wellington on his Grace of Kent, *alias* the Corporal. "God damme! d'ye know what his sisters call him? By God; they call him Joseph Surface!" And on the great dinner at Valenciennes, when the Duchess arrived with an old and ugly lady-in-waiting. "Who the devil is to take out the maid of honour? Damme, Freemantle, find out the mayor and let him do it." And on Mr. Creevey himself, who had neglected to breakfast before a Royal review, and whispered that he was

damned hungry. "Voilà le monsieur qui n'a pas déjeuné!" This was your typical flamboyant hero. He *ought* to have said, "Up Guards and at 'em!" It was the true phrase of the flamboyant style.

And the portrait of Lord Melbourne, reproduced from Sir Edwin Landseer, is the true flamboyant portrait. (So, by the way, is Sir William Orpen's "Chef de l'Hôtel Chatham" once on the walls of the Academy.) Lord Melbourne's immense stock and liberal shirt collar, his curling whiskers and waving hair and shaggy eyebrows and sensuous full-lipped mouth, his coat loosely rolled back to display an expanse of white waistcoat—these are all the trappings and the suits of flamboyancy. I think most of us would like to add Lord Melbourne to that delightful list in Hazlitt: "Persons one would wish to have seen." Over him even Mr. Strachey's pen dwells almost lovingly:—

> In society he was a notable talker, a captivating companion, a charming man. If one looked deeper, one saw at once that he was not ordinary, that the piquancies of his conversation and his manner—his free-and-easy vagueness, his abrupt questions, his lollings and loungings, his innumerable oaths—were something more than an amusing ornament, were the outward manifestation of an individuality peculiar to the core. . . . The feminine element in him made it easy, made it natural and inevitable for him to be the friend of a great many women; but the masculine element in him was strong as well. In such circumstances it is also easy, it is even natural, perhaps it is even inevitable, to be something more than a friend. There were rumours and combustions. Lord Melbourne was twice a co-respondent in a divorce action. . . .

Throughout the book it is the flamboyant people

who win our hearts—Palmerston, with his dyed whiskers, his green gloves, his blue studs and his laugh ("a queer metallic ha ! ha ! ha ! with reverberations in it from the days of Pitt and the Congress of Vienna") and Napoleon III. and that arch-flamboyant Disraeli, so much more amusing than the drab Peel and the drabber Stockmar and the drabbest Albert. But for Albert, there seems to have been a chance at one time that Victoria herself might have become a flamboyant ! Listen to Mr. Strachey :—

> Humanity and fallibility [the allusion is to Lord Melbourne] are infectious things ; was it possible that Lehzen's prim pupil had caught them ? That she was beginning to listen to siren voices ? That the secret impulses of self-expression, of self-indulgence even, were mastering her life ? For a moment the child of a new age looked back, and wavered towards the eighteenth century. It was the most critical moment of her career. Had those influences lasted, the development of her character, the history of her life, would have been completely changed. . . . Albert arrived, and the whole structure of her existence crumbled into nothingness like a house of cards. . . .

And universal *drabness* buries all.

Flamboyancy may be charming but not pretty-pretty. Have you noticed that trait of Lord Melbourne's, "his innumerable oaths" ? We are officially supposed to have dropped oaths to-day. But this is a subject about which there is a good deal of dissembling in print. I will confess for my part that the Duke of Wellington's "By Gods !" and "God dammes !" cause me no discomfort. They

are splashes of bright colour on the shy, decorous style of the page. And they are an appropriate, an inevitable part of flamboyancy; they add the finishing touch to the curly whiskers, the rolled collars, the high stocks, and the bell-topped hats. The art critic of *The Times* obliges me with a happy phrase. He said that somebody's pictures were "not expressions, but expletives." Well, real warm-hearted talk cannot be all mere expression; it has need of the expletive as well. And—let us be frank—in masculine talk it still very often gets it. Thus flamboyancy "springs eternal." But if you want to see it at its most engaging, take this of Lord Melbourne, who never carried a watch. "I always ask the servant what o'clock it is, and then he tells me what he likes." And this, surely, is flamboyancy at its very sweetest? "Of rooks wheeling round the trees, Lord M. would say that he could sit looking at them for an hour and 'was quite surprised at my disliking them. . . .' Lord M. said: 'The rooks are my delight.'"

THE LITERARY DOCUMENT

"As a general rule," writes Sir Sidney Colvin, "I hold it unjust to an author that work which he thought proper to keep to himself should be given to the world after his death." I venture to suggest that Sir Sidney's general rule will have to be proved by many exceptions. "After his death"—does this mean for ever or for a limited number of years? Presumably Sir Sidney would except from his rule such dead authors—to take a few great names at random—as Shakespeare, Fielding, Scott, Dickens; if not, he would certainly have the world against him. Their fame is securely established; the world possesses their published works and has formed its judgment on them. Any unpublished work of theirs would be eagerly, and rightly, welcomed, whatever may have been the author's motive in withholding it. It might or might not be valuable art. But it would certainly be a valuable document. It would be an additional fact in the history of the writer's mind. How can it be "unjust" to him to see that the evidence in his case is as complete as we can get it?

Was it unjust to Jane Austen to publish "Lady Susan" and "The Watsons"? Or, only the other

day, her " Love and Friendship " ? She is still the author of " Pride and Prejudice " and " Persuasion." We are now enabled to see the stages by which she reached that eminence. Her juvenile and other minor works throw some light on her major. If they did not, the fact would be worth noting for itself. It would, indeed, be a miracle. For we know, as Walter Bagehot remarked, that authors do not keep tame steam engines to write their books ; they are the product of a man who lives a certain life and has a certain mind. It is impossible that an unknown Shakespearean work should have nothing in common with the known Shakespeare. But its publication would create for us a better-known Shakespeare—a Shakespeare about whom our judgment would be so much the more " just " by the recognition of a further piece of evidence.

There is a project to publish Stevenson's juvenile play *Monmouth*. Why not ? Because its author didn't, says Mr. Gosse. And therefore, adds Sir Sidney Colvin, it would be unjust to give it to the world after his death. Well, suppose it boyish, crude, as bad as you please. Nevertheless, it is by the hand that wrote " Kidnapped " and " Weir of Hermiston." An author's failures, half-bakings, tentative experiments, throw light for the intelligent student on his successes. And, after all, the matter only concerns the small band of intelligent students. The good general public will not bother itself about Stevenson's *juvenilia*. The smaller band will be the

better for a new fact, which it will be able to relate to the proper date and to the rest of Stevenson's works. It will be more "just" to Stevenson than before, because more fully informed.

Of course authors themselves can hardly be expected to regard their works as "documents." If Stevenson had destroyed the manuscript of *Monmouth*, he would have acted within his right, and there would have been an end of the matter. Again, take the case of Miss Austen and her occasionally slipshod English. She was capable of writing, "I always delight in overthrowing these kind of schemes, and cheating a person of their premeditated contempt," and "Amazed at the alteration in his manner, every sentence that he uttered increased her embarrassment." (Both examples from "Pride and Prejudice.") Had Sister Cassandra pointed out these faults to her, no one would have blamed her for correcting them in a second edition. But they stand, and any one who attempted to correct the text now would be guilty of impudent tampering with the evidence in Jane Austen's case. There is, however, a kind of tampering by authors themselves which seems to me indefensible. Exceptionally fastidious authors, when republishing a book after a lapse of years (say, for a Collected Edition), think themselves at liberty not merely to revise the text for grammatical slips or misprints, but actually to rewrite it. George Meredith and Henry James were notorious offenders. I submit that the practice is

indefensible both on historic and on artistic grounds. It matters not whether or no this or that new phrase is an " improvement " on the old. *Le style est l'homme même*, and the text of a score of years ago is a record of the man as he was a score of years ago. But I know better now (the author of the revised version says in effect) just because I am a score of years older, and this is how I should have expressed myself originally if I had been able to write it with my older head. It would be no more dishonest to " retouch " his photograph at twenty to resemble himself at forty. But the worst of this way of tampering with the evidence is that it necessarily leads to an artistic hybrid—a combination of two styles that are really a score of years apart. When the work was first written it was warm with the author's creative effort. A score of years later that warmth has gone ; he looks at his young work with the cold, critical eye of an older, and necessarily different, man. Clearly he has sinned against art, no less than against history, in tampering with it.

But his faithful old readers find him out and pay him out. They hug their original editions and carefully refrain from reading him in the Collected Works, regarding these merely as works of reference. (For these, in their turn, are documents showing how the older man thought he could improve on his younger self.) In so doing they are more " just " to him than he was to himself. They have refused to let him falsify the evidence.

In the case of Stevenson and *Monmouth* there is, of course, no question of falsification. There a piece of evidence which we know to exist is merely withheld. I cannot think that those who wish to produce it ought to be discouraged. " Let us," said Sainte-Beuve on a wet day, " read *all* Madame de Sévigné." So, I say, let us read all Stevenson, everything of his that we can lay hands on, good, bad, and indifferent, so that we may know the whole man and see him as he really was. How else can we accurately place him ? How else can we be " just " to him ?

AN ELECTION POST-CARD

A FEW days ago I received by post a packet of what is called election literature. One of the candidates for my borough sent me his election address and with it a stamped post-card bearing the words "I will . . . vote for you," which I was requested to sign with my initials and return. At first I was flattered by the assurance that my initials would suffice. More people, thought I, know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows. Then I observed that the post-card bore a number. Evidently I was to be identified by that number, and my pride fell. Nevertheless I signed and despatched the post-card, because the postage had been paid for me. By the time this article is in print I shall have voted accordingly. Why? Because I am told it is my duty. But I really know nothing of this gentleman for whom my vote will have been cast. I have never heard him speak. Nothing would induce me to hear him speak. I have other fish to fry. No matter; my vote will be a vote for "the party." I shall have done my political duty, fulfilled one of the most important functions of citizenship. For it seems I am a "citizen." I do not regard that aspect of myself with any complacency. I meet my

" fellow citizens " in the street, where they keep to the left and I, by dint of ancient habit, to the right, and we collide. Also I meet them in the tube, where they read with every appearance of interest newspapers that I am accustomed to consider as " rags." But we are all " fellow citizens," and the thought irks me. They all, or nearly all, are eager politicians, as you may tell from their discourse. It appears that, when a political leader proposes to address them, they " roll up in their thousands " or " form long queues " to cheer him ; they are immensely excited about it ; newspapers publish photographs of the delirious scene—the orator with his mouth wide open and a " sea " of umbrellas. What is he saying ? You may be sure that he, too, is mentioning the sea.

Ten to one there will be " breakers ahead." Somebody or something will have to be brought " safe into port." *Item*, " the helm of state." *Item*, a " cabin-boy." Our political orators are never tired of nautical tropes, parables, similes and metaphors. It is an old tradition, at least as old as Mr. Pitt. " At a meeting of noblemen and gentlemen at the Albion Tavern, Mr. Addington in the chair, Mr. Braham led the chorus of ' Britannia, rule the waves,' and, in response to a general demand, Mr. Incledon sang, ' The Pilot who weathered the Storm ! ' " That was the sort of thing a hundred odd years ago, and the Pilot has been weathering the storm ever since. But oh, the banality of it !

Orators on any other subject than politics who indulged in these stale, overworked, mechanically reeled out figures of speech would soon be orators without audiences, *bombinantes in vacuo*. Can it be that the function of "citizenship" is incompatible with taste, all sense of literary form, aversion from the stereotype and the ready-made phrase?

I shall be told, I daresay, that this is the mere flummery of the matter; that the "citizen" is intent upon things, not words; and that serious concern for public affairs has no use for such trifles as literary form. Very well, only in that case, *que messieurs les assassins commencent!* Let our political orators refrain from affecting a literary form which is "bad form" and stick to plain words without the false ornament of metaphor. The truth is, it is not irrelevant to talk of the style of a political discourse; emptiness of mind, insincerity, vulgarity of taste will be as infallibly reflected in that style as in any other. Political eloquence has a great literary tradition behind it; you can still read Burke (if you like that rather heavy style); but who can read the dull commonplace or the verbiage and claptrap of political speeches to-day?

You are often reminded that politics are present history and history is past politics. Well, distance lends enchantment. Besides, Lord Chatham and Charles Fox and the younger Pitt are dead; I can take an entirely dispassionate interest in their performances; they are figures on a canvas, heroes of

ancient anecdote, a statue in Hanover-square. But their successors to-day are alive with me and merely fellow human beings; I may even have dined with this one or that; when their performances mean 5*s.* in the £ income-tax out of my pocket and abominably dear cigars I cannot take a dispassionate interest in them. They are politicians, it will be time enough to call them statesmen when they are as dead as Fox and Pitt. If Fox or Pitt were alive now, I suppose they would be sending me a stamped post-card and asking me to sign my initials to "I will . . . vote for you." They would at once lose their glamour for me. You may call history "past politics" if you like, but it makes all the difference whether a politician is mixed up with your daily life or is a figure in the history books. History is politics with the sting taken out. Politics are history that it is no fun to read. No fun? Well, let me amend that and say: moderately entertaining. For instance, I see that my candidate concludes his election address thus:—

> If you should do me the honour to return me as your Representative, I pledge myself to support any measures calculated to promote the true interests and welfare of our Country and our People.

There's a pledge for you! Any candidate of any party might take it. "Calculated to promote, &c." By whom? And in whose opinion? Presumably, in his, the candidate's. In point of fact he has pledged himself to just nothing. That is quite

right, of course; his constituents have no right to exact a definite pledge from him. There is the historic case of Burke and his Bristol electors, who desired him to obey their mandate :—

> Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unassumed communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect, their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs; and, above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

Why, then, profess to give a pledge, which is absolutely meaningless?

Elections have this mildly humorous side. Another is that anything may be said at them which seems likely to injure the candidate, and which no one would ever think of saying at any other time. Boswell asked Johnson whether an imprudent publication by a certain friend of his, at an early period of his life, would be likely to hurt him? "No, sir," replied the Doctor, "not much; it might perhaps be mentioned at an election.

LIP-STICKS

Only a fool asks why women do this or that. There is no answer, or, if there is, they do not know it themselves. This irrationality, as Confucius or another remarked, is one of the secrets of their fascination; one-half of the human race is pleased to see the other half free from the bondage of cause and effect—inhabitants of an intellectual Alsatia, where the writ of logic does not run. Not, of course, that they are lawless; they obey what are called the dictates of fashion, and what is fashion but the law of similarity? Thus the philosopher, with his commonplaces . . . and yet, as with the philosopher in Boswell, "cheerfulness will be breaking in," and cheerfulness boggles at lip-sticks. If lips were merely visible objects, there might be something to say for these dainty little *bâtons* of red paste. They give a voluptuous curve to the thin and pinched, and turn the rigidly straight into the Cupid's bow. But as noses were made, according to Pangloss, to wear spectacles, so lips were made primarily for kisses, and stickiness, in an official phrase which will be familiar to many public servants, "is calculated to defeat, rather than to promote, the object in view."

Nor do lip-sticks, you would suppose, go well with the pleasures of the table. They cannot even be used as chopsticks. Yet, with my own eyes, I saw a lady the other day at a restaurant table plying her lip-stick as frequently as her knife and fork. Oh, I forgot, she was also smoking a cigarette. To keep these four articles in perpetual motion was a feat that reminded you of Cinquevalli. Then came the moment for dessert and coffee, and thereafter the lip-stick had the field all to itself. With a little hand-mirror, to speak by the card. The lady used it as the advocate in the *Spectator* used " the thread of his discourse," punctuating with it her remarks to her gallant (who, wonderful man, never turned a hair !), and giving a complacent little dab in the corner of the mouth when she made (as I suppose) a particularly neat point. Here, I reflected was a new use for the lip-stick. It had served its turn as a mere beautifier, an implement for Belinda when she

> Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace
> And calls forth all the wonders of her face,

and had been promoted ; it had become didactic, expository, something between a lecturer's wand and a chairman's mallet, capable at once of driving an argument home and calling you to order.

But conversation cannot go on indefinitely. Arguments give out. Interruptions flag. Words are vanity. And so it was at that table. The pair fell to silence. But the lip-stick went on waving through the air, describing graceful arabesques, and

now and then pulled up short with a jerk. As you may imagine, the lady's face was by this time a hard, pale mask, with a scarlet gash in it—like the ladies' faces "At a Menagerie," in that delicious little Venetian picture in the National Gallery. Evidently, for this damsel the nice conduct of the lip-stick had become what smoking is for men or nail-biting for boys, an automatic habit.

What struck at least one onlooker was the unabashed publicity of the whole affair. Women used to "make up" in private, in their dressing-rooms, or in the drawing-room before the gentlemen had left their wine—somewhere, at any rate, behind the scenes. Now they powder their noses and redden their lips with a flaunting publicity in the street, on the top of the 'bus, at the restaurant, in the theatre, everywhere. No sensible man objects to what, after all, is a real mark of confidence. It is as much as to say, "We women know that you men know that we make up; why then affect any longer to make a secret of it? Let us play the game above board; come and see us at it." Let us hear, then, no more of the "mysteries" of the Bona Dea. Call them, rather, publicities.

It is odd to note the variations of female fashion in this matter of public intimacies. In the time of Louis XIV., as readers of Madame de Sévigné's letters know, ladies received in bed the ceremonious visits of gentlemen. In *The Way of the World* Lady Wishfort receives Sir Wilful and other men while

seated at her toilet-table. But the art of make-up was then in a much cruder stage :—

LADY W. : Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart ? An arrant ash colour, as I'm a person. Why dost thou not fetch me a little red ?

PEG. : The red ratafia, does your ladyship mean, or the cherry brandy ?

LADY W. : Ratafia, fool ? No, fool. Not the ratafia, fool—grant me patience !—I mean the Spanish paper, idiot complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint, dost thou understand that ?

Well, " paint, paint, paint " is as much in demand as ever. But it has become an outdoor, as well as a parlour, game.

WITHDRAWN

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS, LTD.,
LONDON AND TONBRIDGE

Two ways of looking at Shaw as a critic.

1. Ignoring his later world-famous development and all: a comedian during these early years as a critic

P 1.1² g

English
NW40.M6
1923

WITHDRAWN